

SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



The Seventh Book of the *Stromateis*

*Proceedings of the Colloquium
on Clement of Alexandria
(Olomouc, October 21–23, 2010)*



Edited by
MATYÁŠ HAVRDA, VÍT HUŠEK,
AND JANA PLÁTOVÁ

BRILL

The Seventh Book of the *Stromateis*

Supplements
to
Vigiliae Christianae

Texts and Studies of
Early Christian Life and Language

Editors

J. den Boeft – B.D. Ehrman – J. van Oort
D.T. Runia – C. Scholten – J.C.M. van Winden

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PREFACE

This book contains studies whose drafts were presented at (or prepared for) an international colloquium on Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis*, book seven. The colloquium took place at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic, on October 21–23, 2010. Out of the eighteen contributions written for this occasion (and, with two exceptions, read and discussed in Olomouc), sixteen were prepared for publication.

The Olomouc colloquium was one of the first specialized gatherings of scholars working on Clement of Alexandria. Why have the organizers chosen the seventh book of the *Stromateis*, rather than, for example, the first book, or some topic that would provide an opportunity for a more general discussion of the author, his work, and its context? The answer is simple. The seventh book is in many ways Clement's crucial work, representing his method of writing at its best and providing an access to the most important facets of his thought. It is the last extant part of the *Stromateis*, or the last one that was surely finished by its author. It was not meant to be so: In the seventh book Clement anticipates at least one '*Stromateus*' to follow, promising to start, after the end of this one, "from another beginning." Nevertheless he also presents the seventh book as a culmination of the preceding volumes, more precisely of the 'ethical account' or the 'ethical part' of Christian philosophy, starting, presumably, at the beginning of book two. It is this position of the seventh book as the summit of the 'ethical part' that makes it so interesting for the student of Clement. Being the end-point of the preceding discussions of various ethical questions it reveals the contours of the whole into which they properly belong. To some extent the seventh book is a recapitulation of the most important topics outlined in the 'ethical part,' one that integrates them all into that single-minded, dignified, and startlingly optimistic vision of the world, religious tradition, and the goal of human life, which is so typical of the Alexandrian thinker.

The papers in this volume elaborate on all major aspects of this vision, each one providing Clement's reader with a magnifying glass, so to say, with which these various aspects may be observed in as much detail and clarity as our methodologies allow. The order in which these elaborations enter the stage roughly follows the order in which Clement himself proceeds. In the introduction to his edition of *Stromateis* VII, published in 1997, Alain Le

Boulluec distinguishes three parts within Clement's exposition. In the first part (1, 1–54, 4 = chapters 1–9) Clement responds to the charge of atheism raised against Christians by their philosophical critics. The central topic of this part is a contrast between superstition and piety, explained in such a way as to convene to a philosophically minded reader. In the second part (55, 1–88, 7 = chapters 10–14) Clement picks up on the insight that true piety is based on true knowledge, and discusses the ethical prerequisites of the latter. Thus the main theme of the second part is the ethic of the perfect Christian, the 'gnostic,' and it is here that the 'ethical account' of the preceding *Stromateis* reaches its summit. The third part (89, 1–110, 3 = chapters 15–18) is a transition to the planned continuation of the *Stromateis*, which was supposed to deal with objections raised against Christian faith by "the Greeks and the Jews."

This volume opens with two introductory essays. ANNEWIES VAN DEN HOEK sets the stage for the upcoming discussion by reminding us of its context in the recent history of scholarship. Her bibliographic survey, covering the period of the last circa fifteen years, is prefaced by remarks on the contents of *Stromateis* VII and an outline of recent developments in the field of Clementine studies. ALAIN LE BOULLUEC introduces the subject matter, the goal, and the method of the seventh book, with a particular focus on its first part. Clement's notice in the prologue that in his exposition on piety, addressed to the philosophers, he will not, for the time being, mention "the prophetic words" of the Scriptures (1, 1–1, 3), is a starting-point of an analysis of Clement's method of writing in view of the readers presupposed and the effect intended by the author. By "pretending," as Le Boulluec puts it, "to speak to philosophers in their language," Clement prepares his readers to a stage of understanding at which they would be able to appreciate the 'testimonies' of the Scriptures concerning true piety.

The main topics of the first part are further elaborated in five studies. SILKE-PETRA BERGJAN focuses on the notion of divine providence as 'education' (*paideia*), while exploring its philosophical background and ethical implications in Clement's thought. Bergjan's discussion of the Middle Platonist theory of a 'threefold *pronoia*' as a possible model for the Christian author opens the question of the role of angels in his concept of divine pedagogy. MONIKA RECINOVÁ develops this point in her survey of Clement's angelological doctrines.

After outlining the 'theological' framework of his defence of Christian piety, Clement further prepares his ground by a critique of superstition. GEORGE KARAMANOLIS comments on this section (22, 1–34, 4 = chapters 4–6), showing its continuity with the attitude of Greek philosophers towards

religion. According to Karamanolis, this attitude is characterized by a view of religious behaviour as an expression of religious beliefs and by a tendency to explain superstition as practise based on beliefs that are false. While rejecting Greek religious anthropomorphism on these grounds, Clement (in this discussion) passes over the possible point of his difference from Greek philosophical schools, namely the question of how the correct conception of the divine arises in the mind of the Christian gnostic. The intimate connection between piety and knowledge is also emphasized by HENNY FISKÅ HÄGG in her presentation dealing with Clement's exposition on prayer (35, 1–49, 8 = chapter 7). Hägg shows that Clement regards prayer as an inward 'converse' with God, in the course of which the true gnostic, having embraced divine reality by rational faith, progresses towards perfection aligned with true knowledge. According to Hägg, this knowledge does not consist in having the correct conceptions and ideas about God, since God, in Clement's view, eludes conceptual grasp. Rather, the knowledge arising by means of prayer is a 'participatory knowledge' gained by participation in divine love. The chapter on prayer is further analysed by LORENZO PERRONE from the perspective of comparison with Origen's views on the same topic and with regard to the common biblical background of both authors. Perrone concludes that despite similarities, Clement's treatment of prayer differs from that of Origen in many points of detail, as well as in its overall tone.

The second part of the seventh book is dedicated to the idea of perfection of the Christian gnostic, most fully expressed by the notion of 'the assimilation to God.' Though aware of the Platonic connotations of this phrase, Clement regards the concept as biblical. Matt 5:48 ("Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"), quoted in *Strom.* VII 88, 4, is a starting-point of a discussion of Clement's idea of ὁμοίωσις in the paper by VERONIKA ČERNUŠKOVÁ. Largely drawing on material from book two, Černušková reminds us that the road to perfection in the *Stromateis* is a road of a believer that starts by the confession of sins and repentance, followed by a growing understanding of the causes of sin. This process, made possible by divine love, culminates in love, as the fear of one's evil is gradually overcome by dispassionate love of the good for its own sake. As a result, the gnostic 'becomes like God' in beneficence. In the following paper, JANA PLÁTOVÁ develops this point by focusing on one aspect of beneficence, namely the intercessory prayer whose culmination is the prayer for enemies. Plátová points out the biblical sources of Clement's understanding of the intercessory prayer, especially in the Johannine writings. In the seventh book the portrayal of the gnostic as one who shows mercy even to enemies is framed by Clement's

interpretation of 1 Corinthians 6, a passage explained as a witness of the virtue of *apatheia* (84, 1–88, 7 = chapter 14). JUDITH KOVACS comments on this section, showing that Clement is using Greek ethical concepts to spell out the deeper meaning of Paul's words, but does so in the light of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

The gnostic virtues discussed in the second part of book seven include the ideal of courage based on knowledge and love (60, 1–68, 5 = chapter 11). In the light of this ideal Clement criticizes irrational behaviour of the “so-called martyrs” who “rush into the heart of dangers” out of ambition, fear, or hope for a better life after death (66, 3–67, 2). DAVIDE DAINESE regards this passage as a witness of a more developed view of the best ‘choice of life’ (characterizing the perfect Christian) than the one implied in book four, where Clement exhorts to martyrdom. His paper is a proposal for a reconstruction of this development, prompted, according to Dainese, by the polemic against the Gnostic groups, in the course of which Clement articulates his psychological and pneumatological views. The last aspect of gnostic perfection treated in our volume is its eschatological horizon, “the end without end,” expressed in the idea of *apokatastasis* (see esp. *Strom.* VII 56, 1–57, 5). ILARIA RAMELLI provides a systematic survey of Clement's hints to this idea, showing that although Clement did not develop a consistent theory of *apokatastasis*, nevertheless he paved the way to Origen's theory of universal salvation.

The last part of the seventh book is represented by four papers. MATYÁŠ HAVRDA reconstructs the theory of demonstration implied in Clement's response to ‘sceptical’ doubts about the validity of Christian beliefs. Havrda argues that Clement is using Greek epistemological concepts in order to develop a reliable method of scriptural interpretation. The objections Clement is facing are encouraged by the existence of contradictory views among different Christian groups. To combat the charge of ‘disagreement,’ Clement sets himself to draw a line between orthodoxy and heresy, while emphasizing the unity of the church. PIOTR ASHWIN-SIEJKOWSKI explores Clement's notion of heresy and the tradition of the church, asking to what extent Clement's legacy in this regard is convincing. Church remains the focus of attention in the contribution by OLEH KINDIY, who explains the concept of the church in the *Stromateis* from the perspective of Clement's Christology, specifically the representation of Christ as Pedagogue and Teacher. Considering how intimately connected, in Clement's view, are the respective roles of the church and the school within the framework of divine pedagogy, Kindiy broaches the possibility of Clement's own sacerdotal status.

With MARCO RIZZI we come to the end of *Stromateis* VII, whose very last sentence raises a question of whether and how Clement pursued his plans to continue. Rizzi proposes a solution according to which, after the end of the seventh book, Clement indeed started from ‘another beginning,’ writing other books of the *Stromateis*, perhaps as many as eight. Basing himself on a number of philological arguments, Rizzi suggests that the second half of the original *Stromateis* was separated from the first half in consequence of the passage from volumen to codex and later circulated under the title *Hypotyposeis*.

These are in brief the contents of papers in this volume dealing with the seventh book of the *Stromateis*. Two other texts are appended which must be introduced by a short story. On the second day of the conference, after a block dedicated to Clement’s concept of prayer, Jane Schatkin Hettrick, professor emeritus of music at Rider University in New Jersey, performed an organ concert *cum* lecture at St. Michael’s church in Olomouc, advertised by the title ‘Musical Settings of Clement’s Hymn from the *Paedagogus*.’ The famous anapestic hymn to Christ the Saviour, attached to Clement’s *Paedagogus* in several copies of the ‘Arethas Codex,’ entered North American Christian hymnody in the mid-nineteenth century in a poetic translation by Henry Martyn Dexter. Dr. Hettrick presented a selection of musical settings of this text, covering a period of over 250 years. After introducing the topic, she distributed the sheet music of these various settings and taught the multi-confessional audience to sing this beautiful text in miscellaneous ways. Next morning Annewies van den Hoek echoed this event by giving to each participant a copy of her translation and commentary of Clement’s hymn, published in a critical anthology of ancient prayer (*Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*, ed. Mark Kiley, London: Routledge, 1997, 296–303).

With a kind permission of the author, the original publisher, and the editors of *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, ANNEWIES VAN DEN HOEK’s translation and commentary of Clement’s ‘Hymn to Christ the Saviour’ is republished as Appendix 1 to this volume. An expanded version of JANE SCHATKIN HETRICK’s lecture on the musical settings of Clement’s hymn is enclosed as Appendix 2.

The Clementine colloquium was organized by the Centre for Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Texts, a research group of classicists, philosophers, and theologians, attached to Sts. Cyril and Methodius Theological Faculty at Palacký University Olomouc. The editors of this volume would like to express their gratitude to Lenka Karfíková, one of the founders of the Centre and a promoter of patristic and medieval studies in the Czech

Republic, whose idea it was to make a conference on Clement. We gladly acknowledge the many-sided support of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Theological Faculty, and especially its dean, Gabriela Vlková. We would also like to thank Bogdan Bucur and Marco Rizzi, who encouraged the idea of the conference in its germinal stage, and Alain Le Boulluec, who was the first to accept our invitation. Finally, we are grateful to the editors of this series for accepting the manuscript for publication.

Matyáš Havrda

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i>
BKV	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAG	Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca
CBP	<i>Cahiers de Biblia patristica</i>
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum: Series Graeca
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JAAR	<i>The Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
J ECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
NAWG	Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften Göttingen
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
RHPhR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RSR	<i>Revue des Sciences Religieuses</i>
RSV	<i>Revised Standard Version</i>
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SP	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
SPhilo	<i>Studia Philonica</i>
SPM	<i>Studia Patristica Mediolanensia</i>
SVF	<i>Stoicorum veterum fragmenta</i>
ThPh	<i>Theologie und Philosophie</i>
ThQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
VChr	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VChr Suppl.	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>

ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

INTRODUCTION

STROMATEIS BOOK VII IN
THE LIGHT OF RECENT SCHOLARSHIP:
APPROACHES AND PERSPECTIVES

Annewies van den Hoek

Ráda bych poděkovala organizátorům této konference za pozvání do vašeho krásného města Olomouce. Toto jsou bohužel jediná slova, která mohu říct česky, a tak budu dál pokračovat v angličtině.*

When over thirty years ago my friend and colleague Alain Le Boulluec and I met at the second Origen Conference in Bari, there was only a small minority of specialists on Clement, hardly to be counted on the fingers of one hand: Eric Osborn and André Méhat come to mind as the main protagonists.¹ In those days it was hard to imagine that Clement of Alexandria could merit a conference in his own right, and thus the small group of Clementine specialists was included, perhaps tolerated, as a kind of appendix to the larger contingent of scholars of Origen, Clement's younger Alexandrian contemporary, who was and still is a more prominent and celebrated author.

Therefore, it came as a slight surprise, but it is nevertheless a great pleasure, to be invited to this conference in Olomouc, a town far removed from my geographic consciousness until recently. Clement studies now seem to be in the upswing—so to speak. In the last decade many studies have appeared, and another conference on Clement was, in fact, held as recently as last year, in the form of a summer seminar at the University of Göttingen (in which Ilaria Ramelli and I participated). The seminar was entitled 'Clement of Alexandria in Dialogue.' The papers dealt with most of Clement's works and discussed a variety of topics—only one was partly

* "I would like to thank the organizers of this conference for inviting me to the beautiful town of Olomouc. Unfortunately, these are the only words in your language (Czech) that I can say, so I will now proceed in English."

¹ Henri Crouzel and Antonio Quacquarelli (eds.), *Origeniana Secunda: Second colloque international des études origéniennes, Bari, 20–23 septembre 1977* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1980).

on *Stromateis* VII; the idea was to place Clement in the wider context of theological and philosophical currents of his time.²

The conference that starts today is even more specific: it will deal with only one book of the works of Clement of Alexandria, book seven of his voluminous *Stromateis*. This book has had a fair amount of interest over a long period of time; a good translation and extensive commentary in English existed already at the beginning of the twentieth century, published by Hort and Mayor;³ this work is rivaled only by the more recent French edition of Alain Le Boulluec, published in *Sources Chrétiennes* in 1997.⁴ Other translations and commentaries of the *Stromateis* including book seven have appeared, for example, the Italian edition by Giovanni Pini in the nineteen-eighties.⁵ Occasionally translations, whether in Spanish or Russian, have reached my mailbox, and, as we know, a Czech translation with notes and introductions has been published.⁶

Before approaching the question of recent scholarship, however, I would like to start with a look at the general content of book seven, spotlighting the themes that have been brought out previously. The two commentaries by Hort and Mayor and Alain Le Boulluec, as already mentioned, are most valuable for any such endeavour. When we look at the general plan and the various themes of book seven, there is a fair amount of continuity with the preceding books. Subjects of book six reappear, such as the way of life of the Christian, Greek wisdom, the role of Greek philosophy in the history of salvation, hermeneutical language in the Scriptures, and the role of the 'true gnostic.' Major subjects of book five also resurface: for example, discussions of symbolic language and the apologetic theme of the theft-of-the-Greeks; thus a continuous sequence of topics flows through these books.

We only have to look to the final paragraphs of book seven, and read what Clement has to say himself, looking back his on his enterprise so far:

² "Klemens von Alexandria im Gespräch" (Sommer-Werkstatt, 18.–20. August 2009). Online: <http://www.ratioreligionis.uni-goettingen.de/sommerwerkstatt2009.html>. Ralf Sedlak's paper was dealing with *Strom.* I 27, 1–29, 5 and VII 95, 1–96, 4.

³ Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies, Book VII*. The Greek text with introduction, translation and notes by Fenton J.A. Hort and Joseph B. Mayor (London/New York: MacMillan, 1902).

⁴ Clément d'Alexandrie, *Les Stromates: Stromate VII*. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Alain Le Boulluec (SC 428; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997).

⁵ Clemente di Alessandria, *Gli Stromati. Note di vera filosofia*. Introduzione, traduzione e note di Giovanni Pini (Milan: Paoline, 1985). A new updated edition with introduction by Marco Rizzi was published in 2006.

⁶ See bibliography below.

Having completed this introduction [after seven books!], and given a summary outline of ethical philosophy, wherein we have scattered the sparks of the doctrines of true knowledge dispersedly here and there, as we promised, so that it should not be easy for the uninitiated who came across them to discover the holy traditions, let us pass on to our general argument. Now it seems that what are known as '*Stromateis*' are not to be compared to ornamental parks with rows of ordered plantations to please the eye, but rather to some thickly-wooded hill, overgrown with cypresses and planes and bay-tree and ivy, and at the same time planted with apple trees, olives and figs, the cultivation of fruit-bearing trees being intentionally mingled together, since the Scripture desires to withdraw from observation on account of those who venture secretly to steal its fruits. It is by transplanting the shoots and trees from these preserves that the gardener will furnish a beautiful park and pleasure ground.⁷

It has not been lost on commentators that this summary resembles others, either at the beginning or the end of several of the *Stromateis*. Everyone who studies these books knows all too well that Clement puts in programmatic summaries, without, however, always following them as described. It could be argued that these summaries—some of which look backwards, as in the case of book seven, while others are previews—might reflect the length of the original scrolls, on which Clement and his scribes worked.⁸ Thus, book one would have filled one scroll, book two and three another, book four and five another, book six and seven another. With the transition from separate scrolls to book format, the function of these summaries as previews and reviews obviously changed. In contrast to a scroll, a book has continuous text in which these summaries are more or less hidden, while

⁷ *Strom.* VII 110, 4–111, 2: Τούτων ἡμῖν προδηνυσμένων καὶ τοῦ ἡθικοῦ τόπου ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ὑπογραφέντος, σποράδην, ὡς ὑπεσχήμεθα, καὶ διερριμμένως τὰ ζώπυρα τῶν τῆς ἀληθοῦς γνώσεως ἐγκατασπεύραντες δογμάτων, ὡς μὴ ῥαδίαν εἶναι τῷ περιτυχόντι τῶν ἀμυήτων τὴν τῶν ἀγίων παραδόσεων εὐρεσιν, μετίωμεν ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν. εἰκόασι δὲ πως οἱ Στρωματεῖς οὐ παραδείσοις ἐξησκημένοις ἐκείνοις τοῖς ἐν στοίχῳ καταπεφυτευμένοις εἰς ἡδονὴν ὕψεως, ὅρει δὲ μᾶλλον συσκίῳ τινὶ καὶ δασεῖ κυπαρίσσοις καὶ πλατάνοις δάφνῃ τε καὶ κισσῷ, μηλέαις τε ὁμοῦ καὶ ἐλαίαις καὶ συκαῖς καταπεφυτευμένῳ, ἐξεπίτηδες ἀναμειγμένης τῆς φυτείας καρποφόρων τε ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀκάρπων δένδρων διὰ τοὺς ὑφαιρεῖσθαι καὶ κλέπτειν τολμῶντας τὰ ὠρία, ἐθελούσης λανθάνειν τῆς γραφῆς. ἐξ ὧν δὴ μεταμοσχεύσας καὶ μεταφυτεύσας ὁ γεωργὸς ὠραίον κατακοσμήσει παράδεισον καὶ ἄλλος ἐπιτερπές.

⁸ *Strom.* I 15, 2–3 (preamble); I 182, 3 (end) (*Strom.* I: 109 pages); II 1–3 (preamble); III 110, 3 (end) (*Strom.* II–III: 134 pages); IV 1–3 (preamble); V 141, 4 (end) (*Strom.* IV–V: 173 pages); VI 1–4 (preamble); VII 111, 4 (end) (*Strom.* VI–VII: 173 pages). For the organization of the books and the preambles, see also André Méhat, *Études sur les Stromates de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Patristica Sorboniensia 7; Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 148–170. A similar observation can be made at the beginning of Book XIII of Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Origen apologized for starting a new book in the middle of the argument; apparently, with the previous book (XII, now lost) he had reached the limits of the scroll.

previously they may have functioned as visual markers at (or toward) the beginning or at the end of a scroll—if you accept my reconstruction. We only can speculate, of course, on the question how these markers would have functioned: whether they *encouraged* the curiosity of potential readers or perhaps *discouraged* their interest, by intentionally disengaging them.

As in previous books the message at the end of book seven is clear; namely, that there is a reason why the *Stromateis* are organized in a seemingly untidy way, because religious values have to be concealed. Here as elsewhere, Clement offers metaphors, borrowed from vegetation and wild-life, that express the idea of hidden truths: nuts concealed in their shells, flowers scattered over the meadows, fruit-bearing among fruit-less trees, fish caught from the sea. There is plenty to be discovered, Clement argues, but only for those who take the effort to search.

While there are numerous examples of continuity from the previous books, book seven places greater emphasis on spiritual perfection, in particular, the spiritual perfection of the ‘gnostic,’ a word that both as noun and adjective has become a vocal hallmark of Clement’s thought. Throughout his work one can see an increasing frequency of this word, particularly, in books six and seven of the *Stromateis*. A simple word count indicates that γνωστικός in one form or another occurs no less than 112 times in book seven, far more than in book six where it appears 67 times, and more than in all the other books combined.⁹ These simple statistics clearly indicate an increase and prove that the emphasis for Clement in book seven lies in ‘the gnostic’ and gnostic or spiritual perfection.

How then does Clement develop this concept of gnostic perfection? He describes it as a voyage from faith to knowledge with a strong ethical component: not only is there the desire to know and to rise to the highest level of contemplation but also—and this is the first step—to resist temptations, exercise moderation, discern moral dangers, avoid evil, master passionate desires of all kinds—in short, the gnostic endures not only all the stress and strain of earthly life but equally resists its satisfactions. If the way to perfection is successful, the virtuous gnostic becomes the friend of God and the terrestrial image of divine power, and will be similar to angels, patriarchs, apostles, and saints.

Assimilation to the divine is an important theme throughout Clement’s work. In expressing it, he is sometimes inspired by Plato, at other times by

⁹ TLG s.v. γνωστικός: *Paed.* (3); *Strom.* I (7); II (17); III (5); IV (56); V (22); VI (67); VII (112); VIII (1); *Ecl.* (7); *Fr.* (2).

Paul. The most frequent terms that he uses to express the theme are: to assimilate (ἐξομοιόω), to imitate (μιμέομαι), to follow (ἔπομαι), or to draw near (συνεγγίζω). Both God and the Logos can be objects of the assimilation. Again a strong ethical component accompanies the human soul in its attempt to become like God. In earlier books Clement often reiterated the Platonic restriction 'as far as possible,' applying this to a Christian context:

Practicing restraint, we set out on a journey in purity toward piety and activity in conformity to God, *as far as possible* for us in the likeness of the Lord, although in our nature we remain subject to death.¹⁰

The basis here as elsewhere is the idea that the human is minted from the die of the divine image, a concept that conveniently brings Plato and *Genesis* together and puts Clement on a path explored by Jewish Alexandrian predecessors. God or the Logos are suitable teachers, able to imprint on the human a worthy copy of God's likeness (*Protr.* 86, 2).¹¹ In this mode the gnostic becomes an intermediary between the divine and the earthly community. Imitating the Logos, the gnostic also may assume the role of educator and administrator (*Strom.* VII 52).¹² The plan draws on Gen 1:27, which reads that the human being has been created in the image of God; through this formative imprint God enables the gnostic believer to ascend to the ultimate goal of perfect contemplation (θεωρία).

By inviting his readers to participate in the search for knowledge, Clement marks out the ascent in which the purified soul may rise up to the highest stage of contemplation and eternal rest. In his account knowledge goes well beyond the ethical code of a restrained lifestyle, which, for him, only forms the first step for further advancement. In a Platonic mode, Clement compares the ascending stages to luminous elements, which rise like stars or meteors to ever-higher levels. The final stage, however, is no longer in flux but constitutes stability and immovability, which Clement calls the stable or steady light. It represents for him the ultimate stage of contemplation and forms the apex of human divinization. Knowledge at this final stage equals love and is reciprocal: that is, object and subject

¹⁰ *Strom.* II 80, 5: ... καθ' ἣν ἐγκρατευόμενοι καθαροὶ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν καὶ τὴν ἐπομένην ἀκολουθῶς τῷ θεῷ πράξιν στελλόμεθα, ἐξομοιούμενοι τῷ κυρίῳ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἡμῖν, ἐπικήροισ τὴν φύσιν ὑπάρχουσιν.

¹¹ *Protr.* 86, 2: Θεοσέβεια δὲ ἐξομοιούσα τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατάλληλον ἐπιγράφεται διδασκαλὸν θεὸν τὸν καὶ μόνον ἀπεικάσαι κατ' ἀξίαν δυνάμενον ἄνθρωπον θεῷ.

¹² *Strom.* VII 52, 1: Πλείον δέ τι καὶ μάλλον ἐπιτείνει τὸ γνωστικὸν ἀξίωμα ὁ τὴν προστασίαν τῆς τῶν ἐτέρων διδασκαλίας ἀναλαβὼν, τοῦ μεγίστου ἐπὶ γῆς ἀγαθοῦ τὴν οἰκονομίαν λόγῳ τε καὶ ἔργῳ ἀναδεξάμενος, δι' ἧς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον συνάφειάν τε καὶ κοινωνίαν ἐμμεσιτεύει.

become united in friendship and understanding. This, in a nutshell, is the mystical path of gnostic spirituality, as described in book seven. It is striking that all the elements of later medieval mysticism, such as purification, illumination, and unification are already present in this train of thought. Thus the concepts of gnosis and spiritual perfection in book seven stand out, not in the least because they cast a much wider net and touch on a hoard of theological corollaries: God, Logos, creation, and the destination of humans in general.

There is another element that makes book seven unique within the works of Clement; that is, his emphasis on ‘prayer.’ The simple (and rather pedestrian) statistical method that I have used before provides confirmation of this special focus. Whether one takes the noun εὐχή or προσευχή or the verb εὐχομαι with or without prefixes, the word and cognates appear overwhelmingly again in book seven.¹³ The subject first comes up in an apologetic section, in which Clement asks which sacrifices are acceptable to God? After lashing out against Greek practices, the answer to his rhetorical question is that ‘prayer’ is the best sacrifice. Thereafter, Clement expands further on the theme: the gnostic believer has the freedom of conversing with God, continuously honoring God by communication. Through intellectual and spiritual exchange, prayer makes the divine and human cooperate toward contemplation and human salvation. Engaging in genuine prayer the faithful moves upward and gains access to gnostic contemplation.

These two concepts γνωστικός and εὐχή form in my mind the backbone of book seven. Of course, in his customary fashion Clement writes about a hoard of other subjects, some of which are apologetic others polemic in tone. Arguing about Christian faith, he gives evidence that Christians are not atheists; as in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, there is an interesting reversal of the term ‘atheist’ from the perspective of the one who is speaking. Moreover, in his discussion of heretics and heretical rejection, Clement attacks the view of critics who regard Christians as a bunch of sects that fight each other over conflicting beliefs. This prompts Clement to launch a further attack on sectarianism and move on to discussion of all kind of errors—treason, fraudulent imitation, vane pretensions, deception, violence, forgery, negligence, obstinacy, ignorance, weakness, and the van-

¹³ Form of εὐχή: *Paed.* (2); *Strom.* I (3); II (4); III (3); IV (6); V (3); VI (7); VII (30); *Ecl.* (2); *Quis dives* (4); *Fr.* (3); *Exc.* (1) (this is a rough and ready method not taking context into consideration). Form of εὐχομαι: *Protr.* (5); *Paed.* (10); *Strom.* I (3); II (3); III (2); IV (5); V (5); VI (6); VII (24); *Ecl.* (2).

ity of so-called gnosis, while giving advice on how to remedy these evils with the proper education. Still, whether these passages are apologetic, as in the first part of book seven, or polemical, as in the last part, an emphasis on gnosis is present throughout.

These are my observations on reading *Stromateis* VII again, something I had to do before assessing how other scholars—most of whom are present at this conference—have viewed the book in recent times. The question arises whether scholars have continued along earlier lines or if unexpected surprises or new discoveries have surfaced. With that in mind, I looked at some of the publications of the last fifteen years—roughly since the appearance of Alain Le Boulluec's commentary in *Sources Chrétiennes*. I also looked over the program of this conference. Of course, being at the beginning of the program, I do not know yet what you are going to say, so I had to base myself only on your topics and titles. For my own convenience I made a list of books, chapters of books, and articles that could have some bearing on book seven, but soon enough I realized that it is very often referred to in a broader context. So I cast the net rather wide, looking in texts and footnotes for any interesting references to book seven. Slowly but surely my efforts started to look more like a general bibliography on Clement. I was greatly helped by a list sent by my friend and colleague, Lorenzo Perrone, who is outstanding at this kind of work. I left out some titles that refer specifically to, say, table manners as described in the *Pedagogue*, and I tried to avoid the endless publications on Secret Mark.¹⁴ Although I spent a good deal of time in the library retracing books and articles, the bibliography does not pretend in any way to be complete. It will be equally impossible in this short time to comment on most of it, so I just made a list of monographs and articles that interested me—a somewhat subjective approach.

Merely looking at the titles in the bibliography, it became clear that there are new perspectives in the study of book seven. It is striking that there has been a great deal of Eastern European participation, particularly, in the realm of translations and commentaries. The collapse of communism made it possible for a new generation of students and scholars to have easier contact with and access to universities in the West. The first author on my list, for example, is Eugene Afonasin, a colleague from Novosibirsk who came to Boston in the nineteen nineties on a fellowship. His

¹⁴ For a serious introduction, see Scott G. Brown, *Mark's Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith's Controversial Discovery* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 15; Waterloo, Ont.: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005).

training was in ancient and medieval philosophy, and he landed at the Institute for the Classical Tradition at Boston University, established by Meyer Reinhold and Wolfgang Haase, together with scholars from various other countries. Dr. Afonasin contacted me at the time and told me that he was interested in translating the *Stromateis* of Clement into Russian—and so he did.¹⁵ Other centers in Eastern Europe have followed suit. In 2001 Dr. Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski published a Greek-Polish edition with commentary of the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*. Here in Olomouc, the Center for Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Texts offers another vivid example of new approaches and wide-ranging research: not only on the works of Clement of Alexandria, but also on Latin and Greek hagiography, Augustine, Isidore of Sevilla, Thomas Aquinas, and much more.¹⁶

When I look at recent monographs, I see that some of the younger generation of Clement scholars, Bogdan Bucur, Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, and Arkadi Choufrine came from Eastern Europe (Romania, Poland, and Russia) and are now working and teaching in English speaking countries. The journey is not easy, as I can testify, being a migrant myself. It is also striking that many more women than before are involved in the study of early Christianity. At the Origen conference in Bari most participants were male (by and large priests), but in recent bibliography and even in the program of our conference, there is much better gender balance.

Demographic changes, such as a greater participation of authors from the East and a greater involvement of women, are only a part of the story. Every new generation has its own dynamics in terms of scholarship, and the new generation is no different. Moreover, the Clementine field has evolved under the influence of related disciplines, among others and very importantly, 'gnostic' studies stemming from the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library. Theory has also played a new role. Scholars have applied models used in the humanities with sociological and anthropological underpinnings. The interaction of models of power has reached the early Christian field, and feminist studies in religion have left their mark on Clement, so these trends and fashions of modern scholarship have touched our field, as they have many others. There are even a number of recent monographs with novel approaches that relate to book seven of the *Stromateis*. Esoteric and gnostic teaching are concepts with which we were familiar in Clement studies, but what about Christian apophaticism, angelomorphic pneumatology, or heterognostic models?

¹⁵ Afonasin, *Kliment Aleksandrijskij. Stromaty*.

¹⁶ See <http://www.centrum-texty.upol.cz>, and the bibliography below.

In my bibliographic remarks, I will have to restrict myself to a discussion of monographs, and, regrettably, cannot mention all the fascinating articles touching on *Stromateis* VII that have been written, many by those assembled here. I will begin with a book on asceticism and anthropology by John Behr.¹⁷ He provides a chapter on “The Higher Christian Life,” which makes use of *Stromateis* VII and emphasizes the idea of training—Behr frequently uses the term ‘askesis.’ Clement, like Origen, stands in a long tradition of valuing the practice of piety through a devout life, and for Behr they exemplify a transition from martyrdom to monastic practices. For Arkadi Choufrine Clement interacts with heterogeneous traditions that form an essential part of his Alexandrian background, such as Basilidean and Valentinian metaphysics, Philo’s scriptural exegesis, and an ethical theory based on Aristotle.¹⁸ He portrays Clement as a creative theologian who not only appropriated these traditions but also formed a new synthesis. The last part of the book deals with Clement’s idea of deification, and it is in this part entitled “Clement’s Interpretation of ‘Assimilation to God’” that Choufrine draws extensively on book seven. In his view Clement’s idea of ‘theosis’ is based in the notion of turning inward in self-contemplation. Choufrine discusses the issue of Clement’s orthodoxy and concludes that aspects of Clement’s Christological, eschatological, and ecclesiological thought make it possible to consider him a founder of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. For Bogdan Bucur the occurrence of angelic imagery is linked to early Christian discourse about the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Starting from Clement of Alexandria’s less explored writings (*Excerpta ex Theodoto*, *Eclogae propheticae*, and *Adumbrationes*), he argues that Clement’s angelomorphic pneumatology occurs in tandem with Spirit Christology. Bucur discusses various passages of book seven in a section entitled “Clement on the Interior Ascent.” He links the hierarchical order of spiritual beings inhabiting the cosmos to the various stages of interiorization and self-contemplation, in a process that reflects levels of spiritual progress. The three monographs of Behr, Choufrine, and Bucur represent orthodox perspectives of recent scholarship.

From Australia, Andrew Itter offers a book on esoteric teaching and promises a new approach to deciphering the nature and purpose of Clement’s enigmatic writings. It is, of course, always risky to state that one has a ‘new’ approach, because one may not only be the first but also the last to say so. In any case, Itter focuses on the close relationship between

¹⁷ Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*.

¹⁸ Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis*.

¹⁹ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*.

method and doctrine.²⁰ The book concludes with a chapter on the doctrine of *apokatastasis* and discusses the way of universal faith and salvation. Itter sees gnostic perfection playing a unique role in the restoration of the world. References to *Stromateis* VII occur throughout this monograph, and, by the way, it would be great if all authors would include an index of ancient sources; it would make the task of reviewers and other users much easier ...

Leaving the realm of esoterica, we move on to more historical approaches to Clement. Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski has published two major books on Clement both of which have a bearing on book seven.²¹ His latest publication offers a novel and adventurous approach, studying Clement through the attacks of Photius who was active some six hundred years later. Photius' most flamboyant charge is that in interpreting a text from *Genesis* Clement maintains that angels have sexual encounters with mortal women. Obviously the discussion of angels in *Stromateis* VII is important in this context. Ashwin-Siejkowski's earlier book on Clement, whose subtitle is "A Project of Christian Perfection," reviews Clement against a potentially Jewish background, with reference not only to Philo but also to Jewish sapiential literature. The author refers to book seven most often in the sections discussing Clement's concept of 'perfection,' the path to it, and the church, which, in his view, forms the natural habitat of the Christian gnostic.

Henny Fiskå Hägg explores the roots of Christian apophaticism and juxtaposes Clement's apophatic practices with some Middle Platonist authors.²² Apophaticism (from the Greek word ἀπόφασις) is a rhetorical device of mentioning a subject by stating that it will not be mentioned. In a theological context it is a technique for speaking in negative terms about God and is often defined as 'negative theology.' Hägg quotes the memorable words of Eric Osborn in this regard: "Every thinker who has called God ineffable, has nevertheless continued to speak of him."²³ References to *Stromateis* VII occur throughout the book, but they are particularly frequent in the context of the 'gnostic,' the knowledge of God, and the concepts of the power and energy of God.

Work has also been done along more traditional lines. A study by Rüdiger Feulner offers many learned observations and refers to a host of primary

²⁰ Itter, *Esoteric Teaching*.

²¹ Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*; idem, *Clement of Alexandria on Trial*.

²² Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*.

²³ Osborn, *Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria*, 31.

texts, including *Stromateis* VII.²⁴ The book as a whole, however, is, to my taste, conceived too strongly along traditional dogmatic categories. The dissertation of Michael Joseph Brown, later worked into a full-fledged book, analyzes the Lord's Prayer in Clement and Tertullian;²⁵ the part of Clement is based on *Stromateis* VII. Carl Cosaert's study on the text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria has received rave reviews from NT colleagues and is called a major step in our understanding of the text used in Alexandria.²⁶

Let me finish by mentioning two books published by distinguished and seasoned Clement scholars, whose works always inspire and offer new perspectives. One of the books brings together Alain le Boulluec's articles written over a span of thirty years. His scholarship has been dedicated not only to Clement but also to a wide range of other subjects connected with ancient Alexandria.²⁷ The book includes a useful bibliography of his work, but it is almost time for a supplement since we are now five years later and Alain continues to be productive. Eric Osborn, who passed away in 2007,²⁸ published almost until the end of his life.²⁹ Although outspoken, he was always very generous with his knowledge and encouraged younger scholars to work in the field. We all benefitted so much from his presence at conferences and elsewhere. His first book on Clement in 1957 was a landmark, and later in life he produced a series of monographs, the last of which was a second book on Clement; the others being monographs on Tertullian in 1997 and Irenaeus in 2001. In his review Mark Edwards characterizes the second book on Clement as a work that "combines the fermented wisdom of fifty years with the exhilaration of one who has rediscovered a friend of his youth."³⁰ The book touches on all the major themes and passages of book seven and, to my delight, contains a very extensive index with the references.

I have come to the end of my bibliographic journey. There is much more to say, but my time is up, and I hope that the fuller list of bibliography below will help you who are working on Clement to find your way and to discover the many hidden treasures you are searching for.

²⁴ Feulner, *Clemens von Alexandrien*.

²⁵ Brown, *Lord's Prayer through North African Eyes*; idem, "Lord's Prayer Reinterpreted."

²⁶ Cosaert, *Text of the Gospels*. See the review by James Keith Elliott, retrieved from <http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=6784>.

²⁷ Le Boulluec, *Alexandrie antique et chrétienne*.

²⁸ See Runia, *Obituary—Eric Francis Osborn*, retrieved from: <http://www.humanities.org.au/Portals/o/documents/Fellows/Obituaries/EricFrancisOsborn.pdf>.

²⁹ Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*.

³⁰ Mark J. Edwards, *JEH* 57 (2006) 740–742.

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³¹ Many thanks go to Richard Jude Thompson for his editorial help and expertise in formatting the bibliography. At the request of the editors of this volume, the bibliography had been updated before it went to the print.

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PART ONE

PIETY

COMMENT CLÉMENT APPLIQUE-T-IL DANS
LE *STROMATE* VII, À L'INTENTION DES PHILOSOPHES,
LA MÉTHODE DÉFINIE DANS LE PROLOGUE (1–3)?

Alain Le Boulluec

La composition des *Stromates*, dans le détail, est proprement déroutante. Clément lui-même a multiplié les déclarations prévenant ses lecteurs qu'ils ne trouveraient pas dans son ouvrage une organisation claire ni un style limpide, mais qu'ils auraient à faire des efforts pour pénétrer jusqu'au sens caché dans le maquis de son texte. La conclusion du livre VII donne un nouvel exemple de ces mises en garde. En même temps, Clément n'a pas été avare de prologues annonçant les sujets à traiter et leur succession dans la mise en œuvre, ni de résumés ponctuant le progrès des développements et soulignant le passage d'une étape à une autre. La structure générale des livres est assez aisément perceptible; la répartition des grands ensembles et leur articulation peuvent même être mises en relief avec une évidence toute particulière, comme dans le livre III, apologie du mariage menée sur deux fronts, contre les licencieux et contre les encratites. Les masses principales et leur disposition apparaissent assez nettement dans le livre VII. La première partie offre un exemple de choix à une analyse du rapport délicat entre la fermeté des principes de composition affichés et la subtilité de leur incorporation dans la matérialité de l'écriture. Le prologue, en effet, délimite un sujet et définit une méthode: montrer aux philosophes grecs, en partant de leur culture et sans invoquer «les paroles prophétiques», que seul est véritablement pieux le gnostique chrétien. Mon propos sera d'examiner comment la méthode est suivie dans le corps du texte. Que Clément ait recours à la réflexion des philosophes sur le sujet, même si sa manière est le plus souvent allusive ou elliptique, il n'y a pas de doute là-dessus. Il serait trop long de revenir sur cet aspect, d'autant qu'il y a certainement encore d'autres sources à identifier ou d'autres représentations communes à Clément et aux philosophes de son temps à repérer. J'essaierai surtout de voir dans quelle mesure est respecté l'engagement pris de différer la manifestation du texte même de la «prophétie».

1. MÉTHODE ET DÉLIMITATION DE L'EXPOSÉ SUR LA PIÉTÉ

Les emplois de θεοσεβής, θεοσεβεία, θεοσεβέω, εὐσεβής, εὐσεβεία, εὐσεβέω, ὁσιος, ὁσίως, ὁσιότης sont présents dans le livre VII surtout de 1 à 58, depuis l'annonce du thème en 1, 1 jusqu'au « témoignage » choisi « chez le prophète David » en 58, 1 (Ps 23 :3-6). Celui-ci rompt avec force, sur ce sujet, la réserve exprimée en 1, 3 (« Quant aux paroles prophétiques, nous n'en ferons pas mention pour le moment, réservant pour plus tard, aux lieux appropriés, l'emploi des Écritures ... »). Par la suite, la double mention de la θεοσεβεία en 59, 6 appartient à la transition entre la recherche sur la piété véritable et l'exposé sur les conséquences éthiques de la définition obtenue : par analogie avec les vertus, la piété authentique, « fondée sur la science (ἐπιστημονική) » connaît la fin qui est la sienne et se manifeste par une conduite raisonnée, de même que le courage réellement vertueux ne se limite pas à l'impulsion d'un tempérament fougueux (59, 3-4) : « Par conséquent, non seulement le gnostique, eu égard à la piété, se montre tel à nous, mais tout son programme de conduite est en accord avec la dévotion fondée sur la science ».¹ Quant à la description de cette « vie du gnostique », annoncée en 59, 7, elle s'achève par l'interprétation de Mt 5:48, qui y voit une ellipse : « Devenez parfaits comme votre Père » (le veut), et se termine par des mots qui maintiennent la piété au premier plan : « ... alors, tout à la fois, nous reconnâtrons la volonté même de Dieu et nous mènerons dans la piété alliée à la noblesse de pensée une vie digne de son commandement (εὐσεβῶς ἅμα καὶ μεγαλοφρόνως πολιτευσόμεθα) ».² Le thème de la piété revient dans la troisième partie (89-110)³ qui répond aux objections des Grecs et des Juifs tirées de l'existence des « sectes » chez les chrétiens. Il faut un surcroît de perspicacité « pour examiner les moyens de mener une vie stricte et ce qu'est la piété véritable envers Dieu (καὶ τίς ἡ ὄντως οὐσα θεοσεβεία) ».⁴ Les gens des « sectes » malmènent intentionnellement les Écritures. « En cela donc, ils n'ont pas de piété, puisqu'ils refusent les préceptes divins, c'est-à-dire l'Esprit Saint ».⁵

Si le thème de la piété est présent dans tout le livre, il est développé de façon insistante dans la controverse avec les philosophes, sous la forme du slogan, introduit en VII 1, 1 : « seul est réellement pieux (θεοσεβής) le gnos-

¹ *Strom.* VII 59, 6.

² *Strom.* VII 88, 4-7.

³ Voir aussi *Strom.* II 73, 1 et 80, 6-7.

⁴ *Strom.* VII 91, 1.

⁵ *Strom.* VII 99, 4.

tique», conformément à la promesse faite au livre précédent (VI 1, 1). Le slogan est repris en VII 2, 1 (avec les termes *ῥσιος* et *εὐσεβής*). Des expressions qui le rappellent ponctuent les développements suivants: VII 3, 4 (*θεοσεβής*); VII 16, 1 (*εὐσεβής*); VII 22, 2 (*θεοσεβής*); VII 36, 2 (*ῥσιος*); VII 42, 2.3 (*ἡ τοῦ γνωστικοῦ δσιότης*); VII 47, 3 («Et celui qui a acquis la connaissance de Dieu est pieux et religieux [*ῥσιον καὶ θεοσεβῆ*]). Oui, nous l'avons prouvé, seul est religieux [*εὐσεβής*] le gnostique»). Un passage saturé par le vocabulaire de la piété, en VII 54, 2-4, vient clore l'exposé destiné à prouver aux philosophes que seul est réellement religieux et pieux le gnostique. Clément y souligne même un acquis capital de sa démonstration: «Donc le chrétien n'est pas athée (c'est le point qu'il fallait prouver aux philosophes) ... Il en résulte que, loin d'être impie, seul il est réellement religieux de façon pieuse (*θεοσεβεῖ δσίως*) et appropriée ...». Telle est la marque de la conclusion de la première partie du livre VII.

Le thème de la piété n'est pas abandonné pour autant. La suréminence du chrétien parfait, le gnostique, ayant été prouvée, les rapports entre la connaissance et la foi sont alors définis, de manière à mettre en évidence la condition de celui qui est parvenu à la connaissance, l'égalité avec les anges (58), et la relation qui l'unit avec l'objet connu, le Seigneur. C'est à cet endroit qu'apparaît, de façon très appuyée, une citation explicite de la «prophétie», Ps 23:3-6, en guise de définition concise du gnostique (58, 3), avant l'analogie qui fait entrer la piété dans l'ensemble des vertus et qui ouvre l'exposé proprement éthique, en 59, 6. Or l'insertion, fortement mise en relief, de ce texte scripturaire paraît correspondre au programme formulé dans l'introduction du livre: «les témoignages» sont rendus manifestes⁶ une fois que les arguments présentés pour prouver aux philosophes, «d'après leur propre culture»,⁷ que seul est véritablement pieux le gnostique (chrétien) ont été rendus concluants (54), sans faire appel «aux paroles prophétiques».⁸ Il faut remarquer que la citation de Ps 23:3-6 est choisie par Clément comme désignant de manière concise (*συντόμως*) ce qu'est le gnostique, c'est-à-dire à la fois la qualité de sa piété et la condition supérieure à laquelle le fait accéder, en réponse, l'objet de sa piété, Dieu,⁹ et aussi comme indiquant la doctrine chrétienne sur Dieu, le Père un et tout-puissant, révélé par le Fils.¹⁰ Or ce sont ces deux aspects de la

⁶ Cf. *Strom.* VII 1, 3.

⁷ *Strom.* VII 1, 2.

⁸ *Strom.* VII 1, 3.

⁹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 58, 1.3.

¹⁰ Cf. *Strom.* VII 58, 3-5.

piété, subjectif et objectif, qui ne cessent d'être traités ensemble dans les développements qui précèdent la citation. Un écho lourd de sens matérialise en outre le lien entre la fonction des paroles du Psaume et la méthode définie dans l'introduction : la reprise de l'adverbe κεφαλαιωδῶς en 58, 1, employé en 1, 3. Retenons d'abord cet écho comme un trait supplémentaire de la structure du livre, telle qu'elle a été expressément projetée par Clément : l'argumentation destinée aux philosophes, selon les règles édictées au début, a dû prendre fin avant l'insertion de la lettre même de la « prophétie ». Ensuite, pour en pénétrer le sens, il est nécessaire d'examiner de près la méthode annoncée par l'exorde. Clément, en effet, ne dit pas qu'il va tout simplement tirer parti des définitions de la piété élaborées par les philosophes grecs « à partir de leur culture », sans citer « les paroles prophétiques ». Il va de soi que pour démontrer que seul le gnostique (chrétien) est authentiquement pieux, il doit donner une idée de ce qu'est la piété chrétienne, en tâchant de prouver qu'elle correspond mieux que celle des philosophes aux exigences qu'ils imposent eux-mêmes. En fait, sans citer les textes « prophétiques », il indiquera « les preuves qui en proviennent », « à l'intention de ceux qui n'en comprennent pas encore les expressions », c'est-à-dire qu'il mettra en évidence « les significations (τὰ σημαίνονμενα) », « sans interrompre la continuité de l'exposé en incluant les textes scripturaires » sous leur forme littérale. Et il le fera « en donnant une description sommaire du christianisme (κεφαλαιωδῶς τὸν χριστιανισμὸν ὑπογράφοντες) », ou, dans les termes équivalents du prologue du livre VI : « en exposant de façon sommaire (κεφαλαιωδῶς) le culte religieux (θρησκεία) du gnostique ».¹¹ Clément entend ici par « christianisme » la façon chrétienne de rendre un culte à la divinité. Pour le décrire, même dans les limites d'une définition approximative, il ne s'interdit pas de recourir à l'autorité de l'Évangile, ou de l'Apôtre ; la première partie du livre VII, déjà, le montre abondamment.

¹¹ *Strom.* VI 1, 1. Cf. *Paed.* II 1, 1, à propos de la conduite du chrétien en général, cette fois : « Maintenant, ... nous devons donner une description sommaire (κεφαλαιωδῶς ὑπογραπτέον) de ce que doit être dans toute sa vie celui qu'on appelle un chrétien ». Un tour comparable à celui de *Strom.* VII 1, 3 se trouve chez Denys d'Halicarnasse, *Antiquités romaines* I 72, 4 : ne pouvant exposer en détail les charges des fétiaux, il va en donner, « sommairement esquissées (κεφαλαιῶδεις ὑπογραφεῖ) », les grandes lignes. Il convient de corriger ma traduction de SC 428, 41 (« selon les principaux sujets ») et 189 (« qui les résume tous »). Sur le sens de « sommaire » pris par le nom κεφάλαιον au pluriel, voir Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, dans Porphyre, *Vie de Plotin*, ed. Luc Brisson et al., vol. I (Paris : Vrin, 1982), 317–318. L'adverbe ne désigne pas la composition sous la forme des *capitula* repérés comme matériaux des *Stromates* par André Méhat (*Étude sur les Stromates de Clément d'Alexandrie*, Paris : Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966, 179–205).

Clément emprunte aux paroles de ce qui est en train de devenir le « Nouveau Testament » l'enseignement capable de pallier l'ignorance des philosophes. Il vient accomplir ainsi le programme sous-jacent au regret exprimé au livre VI :

La philosophie ... parle de Dieu de manière générale, mais sans observer encore ce qui relève de la précision et du détail. En effet, ni sur le Fils de Dieu ni sur l'économie voulue par la Providence, elle ne fournit le même type de développement que nous, car elle n'a pas connu le culte qui convient à Dieu (τὴν κατὰ τὸν θεὸν ... θρησκείαν).¹²

C'est justement la connaissance du « Fils de Dieu » et de « l'économie », trouvée dans le Nouveau Testament, qui permet à Clément, au livre VII, de montrer aux philosophes comment la piété du gnostique chrétien, elle seule, incarne « le culte qui convient à Dieu ». ¹³ Par ses emprunts au Nouveau Testament, il ne transgresse pas la méthode définie dans l'introduction : quand il en cite des passages ou des expressions, il ne fait que mettre en évidence « les significations » des paroles prophétiques, ¹⁴ puisque celles-ci sont expliquées par la foi dans le Christ et la connaissance de l'Évangile. ¹⁵ Pour rendre justice à la méthode de Clément, il faut insister sur le choix des « paroles prophétiques », qui implique d'abord une distinction entre elles et l'Évangile et les écrits des Apôtres. Lorsqu'il aura le sentiment d'avoir achevé sa démonstration sur la piété à l'intention des philosophes, il pourra retenir, parmi les nombreux témoignages tirés de l'Écriture (ἐκ γραφῆς μαρτύρια), un texte du « divin Apôtre », ¹⁶ sans avoir à faire cette distinction, à propos de la perfection du gnostique. La description du « christianisme », « faite sommairement (κεφαλαιωδῶς) », ¹⁷ rendue ainsi possible, est en quelque sorte récapitulée « sous forme de sommaire (κεφαλαιωδῶς) », par le « témoignage » prophétique, Ps 23:3–6, cité de façon très appuyée, pour indiquer tout à la fois la « réponse » que donne l'activité bonne du Seigneur à la piété du gnostique, à savoir la situation éminente qui est conférée à celui-ci, et la théologie correspondante, c'est-à-dire le discours sur le Fils Sauveur et révélant le Père. ¹⁸

¹² *Strom.* VI 123, 2.

¹³ Comparant le « christianisme », comme « science » cette fois, à la rhétorique ou à la médecine, Clément affirme que les « chrétiens » doivent « adopter les seules paroles du Christ » (fragment 68 Stählin, transmis par les *Sacra Parallela* 317 Holl).

¹⁴ *Strom.* VII 1, 3.

¹⁵ Cf. *Strom.* IV 134, 2–4 ; VI 123, 1 ; 125, 3 ; VII 104, 1.

¹⁶ *Strom.* VII 84, 2.

¹⁷ *Strom.* VII 1, 3.

¹⁸ *Strom.* VII 58, 1–6.

Si la première partie du livre VII prétend parler aux philosophes leur langage, elle les prépare aussi à la lecture des Écritures prophétiques, au moyen du sens que fournit le Nouveau Testament. Il faut différer le contact direct avec les textes eux-mêmes, parce que les philosophes sont encore incapables de saisir leurs expressions.¹⁹ La raison capitale, laissée implicite ici par Clément, est que la « prophétie » est foncièrement cryptique et qu'elle ne peut être comprise sans un enseignement préalable, surtout par des gens, les philosophes grecs, qui insinuent que le gnostique chrétien est « athée »²⁰ et qui « persécutent imprudemment et à la légère le Nom ».²¹ Il convient de n'exposer « de façon sommaire le culte religieux du gnostique que dans la mesure où il ne sera pas dangereux de le mettre par écrit dans un aide-mémoire ».²² Le remède appliqué dans le livre VII consiste à partir de ce qui est familier aux philosophes. Il reste qu'ils devront avoir accès aux Écritures prophétiques elles-mêmes. En effet, comme le dit Clément, « il faut honorer, ..., dans l'ordre de l'enseignement, la philosophie très ancienne et la très auguste prophétie »,²³ qui sont antérieures à la philosophie des Grecs—quelle que soit la diversité de ses thèses sur la subordination de la philosophie grecque à la « philosophie barbare »—,²⁴ et dont l'antiquité, selon la conception la plus répandue à l'époque, donne à leurs « témoignages » une valeur infiniment précieuse.

L'introduction du livre VII veut par ailleurs apaiser un autre lectorat : la majorité des chrétiens risque d'être rebutée par le tour philosophique de l'exposé et scandalisée par un discours dont la lettre est différente de celle des « Écritures du Seigneur » ;²⁵ Clément, pour sa défense, répète que sa description du « christianisme » sera conforme aux « significations », avec une insistance plus grande : « Il faut savoir que (nos propos) tirent » des Écritures « l'inspiration et la vie (ἐκείθεν ἀναπνέει τε καὶ ζῆ) ».²⁶ Le recours à l'enseignement du Nouveau Testament garantit que l'exposé est gouverné par le sens de la « prophétie », compte tenu de la liaison indissoluble qui est postulée entre la Loi et la prophétie d'une part, l'Évangile et les apôtres de

¹⁹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 1, 3.

²⁰ *Strom.* VI 1, 1 ; VII 1, 1.

²¹ *Strom.* VII 1, 1.

²² *Strom.* VI 1, 1.

²³ *Strom.* VII 2, 2.

²⁴ Voir Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses. The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteborg : Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1995), 112–139.

²⁵ *Strom.* VII 1, 4.

²⁶ *Strom.* VII 1, 4.

l'autre.²⁷ À l'intention des chrétiens, Clément va jusqu'à dire, après avoir cité Ps 118:2 sur le devoir de «scruter les témoignages du Seigneur»: «or ce sont la Loi et les Prophètes qui témoignent au sujet du Seigneur».²⁸ Mais la même affirmation peut être entendue par les philosophes, en raison du caractère auguste et de l'antiquité de la Loi et des Prophètes.²⁹

La caution des «témoignages» les plus anciens est censée apporter aux philosophes, selon la représentation commune à Clément et aux platoniciens de son temps, confirmation et preuves. Leur obscurité, à pénétrer par l'approfondissement de la parole évangélique, les pare en outre du prestige propre au «genre symbolique».³⁰ C'est finalement à propos du philosophe converti, devenu chrétien parfaitement pieux, que Clément pourra dire:

Pour nous donc, seul le gnostique, qui a vieilli dans les Écritures elles-mêmes, qui respecte la ligne droite, apostolique et ecclésiastique, des doctrines, mène la vie toute droite conforme à l'Évangile, ramené qu'il est par le Seigneur à découvrir à partir de la Loi et des Prophètes les démonstrations qu'il recherche.³¹

Le lien est très fort entre le prologue du livre VII et le passage où intervient la citation de Ps 23:3–6. Étant donné que ce «témoignage» apparaît de façon si insistante après la conclusion, en 54, 4, de l'argumentation destinée aux philosophes, Clément a sans doute voulu rappeler l'itinéraire pédagogique annoncé au début du livre. La solennité de la référence au «prophète David» en 58, 1 laisse entendre qu'il est temps de rompre la réserve promulguée alors et que dorénavant le recours aux «témoignages» est licite.

La première partie cependant, constituée par la démonstration adressée aux philosophes grecs, est loin d'être dépourvue d'allusions à l'Ancien

²⁷ Voir par exemple *Paed.* III 87, 3–4, *Strom.* II 37, 2; 73, 1; III 8, 5; 70, 3; 76, 1; IV 2, 2; 91, 1; V 31, 1; VI 88, 5; 125, 3; VII 63, 1; 95, 3.

²⁸ *Strom.* VII 1, 6. Cf. *Strom.* VI 22, 1. Il y a aussi cette concession faite plus loin: «Mais si l'un des Grecs, sautant le premier degré, la philosophie grecque, s'est élancé tout droit vers l'enseignement véritable, il a gagné le concours de disque, si ignorant soit-il, car il a choisi le raccourci du salut qui par la foi mène à la perfection» (*Strom.* VII 11, 3).

²⁹ Notons aussi que l'enseignement délivré au début du livre VII ne porte pas sur la «vérité» elle-même, mais sur la «piété» et, en outre, qu'il est censément «sommaire». Le prologue ne contredit donc pas un texte tel que *Strom.* VI 123, 1: «Si donc, selon Platon lui-même, il n'est pas possible d'acquérir une connaissance complète du vrai qu'en la recevant de Dieu ou des enfants de Dieu, nous avons raison d'être fiers de choisir les témoignages venus des paroles divines, d'abord sous forme de prophéties, puis de claires explications, pour recevoir par le Fils de Dieu l'enseignement complet de la vérité» (traduction de P. Descourtieux, SC 446, 305).

³⁰ Voir par exemple *Strom.* V 44, 1.

³¹ *Strom.* VII 104, 1.

Testament, voire de citations. Or c'est dans cette première partie, de 2, 1 à 54, 4, que Clément est censé avoir suivi la méthode définie dans le prologue. Peut-on dire pour autant qu'il n'a pas respecté les règles qu'il a édictées au début du livre ? Le tour que prennent ces références permet d'apporter une réponse nuancée à cette question.

2. COMMENT LA MÉTHODE EST-ELLE APPLIQUÉE ?

Certaines de ces références, tout d'abord, ne sont pas insérées dans l'argumentation comme des citations scripturaires. Il s'agit en premier lieu de termes propres à la Septante, mais tout à fait compréhensibles pour des Grecs. Ainsi, pour réfuter le grief d'athéisme, Clément fait-il appel au nom παντοκράτωρ, qui affirme la puissance universelle de Dieu,³² et qui est adopté par les chrétiens. L'« éducation correctrice » vise « celui qui est dur de cœur (τὸν σκληροκάριον) ».³³ La pédagogie divine, adaptée à la qualité des destinataires, fait partie des activités de Dieu (en l'occurrence du Fils de Dieu) qui attestent sa providence, notion bien connue des philosophes dans leurs discours sur la divinité (cf. 12, 1–5). La métonymie du « cœur », d'autre part, a envahi le « christianisme », à partir du Nouveau Testament, pour désigner la personnalité humaine. Le titre de Σοφία, « Sagesse », est appliqué au Fils, et peut prendre le relais du terme intellect (νοῦς) utilisé par les philosophes platoniciens, de même que Λόγος, johannique (7, 4).

Il s'agit ensuite de thèmes caractéristiques de la « prophétie » portés par des textes particuliers des Écritures, sans que ceux-ci soient signalés comme tels par Clément. Insistant, en accord avec les philosophes (depuis Platon, *Phèdre* 247a7 et *Timée* 29e2), sur l'absence d'envie en Dieu,³⁴ et la rapportant à son impassibilité, il introduit une doctrine chrétienne : « c'est un autre qui est envieux, que la passion a touché », ³⁵ en se fondant, sans le dire, sur Sg 2:24. Cet envieux est substitué au « méchant » imaginé un instant par le demiurge dans son discours aux autres dieux en *Timée* 41b. Au « christianisme » appartient l'accord entre les « prophéties divines » et

³² *Strom.* VII 4, 3; 7, 4; 12, 1; cf. 58, 4; voir Jean-Pierre Batut, *Pantocrator. « Dieu le Père tout-puissant » dans la théologie prénicéenne* (Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 189; Paris: Institut des Études Augustiniennes, 2009), 348–367 (sur Clément).

³³ *Strom.* VII 6, 1.

³⁴ Voir Dietmar Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung in den Stromateis des Clemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1983), 41 n. 37.

³⁵ *Strom.* VII 7, 2.

le Nouveau Testament sur l'identité du Fils et Seigneur (6, 2). Quant à l'interprétation, en 6, 4, de la chute des anges et de leur répartition entre les peuples, en lien avec le don de la philosophie aux Grecs et avec les biens dispensés aux Barbares (11, 1–2), elle n'est pas référée explicitement à Gn 6:2.4 ni à Deut 32:8–9, mais elle est insérée comme une pièce de la conception chrétienne de la Providence, remplaçant les représentations grecques issues du mythe du *Timée* (42e), où le démiurge délègue aux « dieux jeunes » l'administration du « vivant mortel », et surtout l'évocation du règne de Cronos dans le *Politique* 271d–e.³⁶ Pour définir les relations entre le Fils et le Père ou, selon une perspective philosophique, transformée par le « christianisme », entre le premier principe, transcendant, cause originelle, et le démiurge, il insère, sans le préciser, des expressions qui modifient considérablement la conception des philosophes, en introduisant dans ces relations affection et coopération, et qui viennent de ce qu'il appelle dans le prologue « les paroles prophétiques » : le Seigneur, Dieu lui-même, a été le « conseiller » (Is 40:13) du Père et il « était la Sagesse dont se réjouissait (cf. Pr 8:30) le Dieu tout-puissant ».³⁷ Ce procédé n'est pas contraire à la méthode annoncée. Il tend à familiariser les philosophes avec les thèmes de la « prophétie », à traduire insensiblement leur discours sur la divinité et sur la piété qui lui est due dans le langage des Écritures, à les introduire ainsi à un autre enseignement, qui ne détruit pas le leur, mais qui est censé les acclimater à une forme de culte supérieure, sans les contraindre encore à affronter la difficulté des textes eux-mêmes.

L'intrusion de la « prophétie » en 14, 1 comme récapitulation

Une entorse, au contraire, semble infligée à la méthode, quand Clément, en 14, 1, confirme sa parole par l'autorité de l'Écriture, pour récapituler les qualités qui font la piété du gnostique : « Telles sont les vertus qui, je l'affirme, sont offrande agréée (cf. Is 56:7) auprès de Dieu, car l'Écriture dit que le cœur sans orgueil (cf. Ps 50:19b) pourvu de science droite est apanage total (ὀλοκάρπωμα) de Dieu (cf. Ps 50:19.18) ... ». Aussitôt après, l'impassibilité, sous la forme chrétienne de l'affranchissement du péché, est

³⁶ Voir Celse, cité par Origène, *Contre Celse* V 25 : « ... les différentes parties de la terre ont été dès l'origine attribuées à différentes puissances tutélaires et réparties en autant de gouvernements ... » ; cf. *Contre Celse* VII 68. Jean Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien et la culture de son temps* (Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 133 ; Paris : Institut des Études Augustiniennes, 1992), 381–382, signale les prolongements ultérieurs de cette théorie.

³⁷ *Strom.* VII 7, 4.

présentée comme signifiée par l'Écriture : « Cela, la Loi l'indiquait indirectement (ἡνίσσετο) : elle ordonnait que fût détruit le pécheur (cf. Dt 13:6–10.16, etc.) et qu'il passât de la mort à la vie, à l'impassibilité née de la foi ».³⁸ Suit une apologie de la Loi. Ainsi « les paroles prophétiques », avec leurs termes les plus étranges, comme ὁλοκάρπωμα, sont-elles citées, et interprétées. Doit-on juger, pour autant, que Clément enfreint ses propres règles ? On pourrait considérer plutôt que cette exception marque une première étape dans l'argumentation sur la piété visant les philosophes. Certaines « significations » concernant le culte véritable ont déjà été mises en évidence, assez pour que « les témoignages eux-mêmes » soient produits (cf. 1, 3). Mais les règles édictées au début ne sont pas abandonnées. Le très long développement qui vient ensuite est de nouveau dépourvu de référence explicite aux « paroles prophétiques ». Il faut attendre les réflexions sur les rapports entre les sacrifices et l'alimentation carnée (32, 7) pour trouver une telle référence : « Les sacrifices conformes à la Loi sont des allégories de la religiosité qui est la nôtre : ainsi la tourterelle et la colombe offertes pour les péchés (cf. Lv 12:6) signifient-elles que la purification de la partie irrationnelle de l'âme est agréable à Dieu » ; explication d'un « témoignage » qui est complétée par l'interprétation allégorique (34, 2) du « parfum composé que mentionne la Loi » (cf. Ex 30:34–37), avant le traité sur la prière, l'un des éléments fondamentaux de la piété, où le recours à l'Ancien Testament, à quelques exceptions près, relève moins de l'immersion que de l'instillation pédagogique.

Le recours explicite à l'Écriture en 14, 1–4 a été préparé par les réflexions antérieures qui ont transformé des thèmes platoniciens importants en leur donnant une coloration chrétienne, et cela dans le cadre d'un débat prolongeant, comme l'a montré Tatjana Aleknienė,³⁹ celui qui oppose Socrate à Euthyphron dans le dialogue de Platon sur la piété.

Le premier thème mis en relief par la manifestation de ces « paroles prophétiques » est la convenance des offrandes faites à la divinité. Il évoque la dernière définition de la piété à laquelle Socrate contraint Euthyphron d'acquiescer, avant de l'enfermer dans une nouvelle aporie : « une science du sacrifice et de la prière (ἐπιστήμη τις τοῦ θύειν τε καὶ εὐχεσθαι) ».⁴⁰ La réponse de Clément, correspondant au premier élément de cette définition, est l'expression biblique « offrande agréée » (θυσία δεκτή), présente en

³⁸ *Strom.* VII 14, 3.

³⁹ Tatjana Aleknienė, « La piété véritable : de l'*Euthyphron* de Platon à la piété gnostique dans le livre VII des *Stromates* de Clément d'Alexandrie », *VChr* 60 (2006) 447–460.

⁴⁰ Platon, *Euthyphron* 14c5–6.

Is 56:7 et reprise en Phil 4:18,⁴¹ mais qui n'a rien de surprenant pour une oreille grecque. Des allusions précises à Ps 50:18–19 complètent le témoignage scripturaire. Le « cœur brisé »⁴² de Ps 50:19 devient, dans un langage plus accessible aux Grecs, aux platoniciens en particulier, le « cœur sans orgueil », ἄτυφος, et cette offrande est qualifiée de ὀλοκάρπωμα, « apanage total ».⁴³ Les références psalmiques et l'autorité du rituel du Lévitique et des Nombres sont subtilement interprétées par l'allusion à Sg 3:6–7, qui concerne le sort des « justes » (Sg 3:1) : « Comme l'or au creuset, [Dieu] les a éprouvés, comme apanage total de l'offrande il les a agréés. Au temps de leur visite, ils resplendiront, et comme des étincelles (σπινθήρες) à travers le chaume ils courront ». Une telle offrande est « agréée » en un double sens : par Dieu, son destinataire, et surtout parce qu'elle est conforme à la notion authentique de ce qu'est la divinité ; en effet, parmi les « vertus » qui font du gnostique l'« offrande agréée »,⁴⁴ la « douceur » et « l'amour des hommes » résument les traits de la bonté providentielle de Dieu, reconnus par les philosophes,⁴⁵ et tels que le « christianisme » les a confirmés au moyen de la connaissance la plus haute selon Clément. On peut suivre au fil des exposés antérieurs le développement de cette christianisation du discours philosophique par la mise en évidence du rôle du Fils, discours qui obtient finalement le « témoignage » des « paroles prophétiques » : en 5, 3, « la nature ... la plus bienfaisante est celle du Fils, la plus proche de l'unique Tout-Puissant ». Il est « le Logos paternel qui a reçu le gouvernement saint à cause de celui qui a soumis (cf. Rm 8:20 ; 1Co 15:27), à cause duquel tous les

⁴¹ Cf. Lv 19:5 ; le passage peut-être le plus proche, compte tenu du contexte, serait Siracide 35:6 LXX : θυσία ἀνδρὸς δικαίου δεκτή.

⁴² Voir Laurence Brottier, *Les « Propos sur la contrition » de Jean Chrysostome et le destin d'écrits de jeunesse méconnus* (Paris : Les Éditions du Cerf, 2010).

⁴³ Par substitution à ὀλοκαύτωμα de Ps 50:18b d'un autre mot du lexique grec du Lévitique (voir La Bible d'Alexandrie 3, 38–40), ὀλοκάρπωμα, parfois remplacé dans la tradition manuscrite de la Septante par ὀλοκαύτωμα (ainsi en Lv 5:10 ; 16:24 ; Nb 15:3 ; Jg 16:16). Clément a sans doute préféré ici ὀλοκάρπωμα parce que les « holocaustes » sont repoussés en Ps 50:18b.

⁴⁴ *Strom.* VII 14, 1.

⁴⁵ Dion Chrysostome, par exemple, reprenant un thème répandu depuis le développement de l'évergétisme dans les royaumes hellénistiques, qu'il greffe sur l'appellation homérique de Zeus « père », justifie ce nom par le soin qu'il a des hommes et par sa douceur (*Sur la royauté* I 40) ; voir Jacqueline de Romilly, *La douceur dans la pensée grecque* (Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1979), 306 ; cf. 218–221 (la présence du thème dans les traités sur la royauté) ; 222 (le Zeus de Cléanthe est bienfaisant et ami des hommes). Voir aussi Marc-Aurèle, *Pensées* IX 11 (l'εὐμένεια des dieux), et son action de grâce pour les secours qu'il a reçus des dieux (I 17). Critiquant l'anthropomorphisme païen, Clément lui-même précise : « les Barbares font (aux dieux) un caractère cruel et sauvage, les Grecs un naturel plus doux, mais sujet aux passions » (*Strom.* VII 22, 1).

hommes lui appartiennent». ⁴⁶ Il est le maître qui éduque (6, 1), sans violence (6, 3; 9, 4; 12, 5). Sa φιλανθρωπία est parfaite, en ce qu'elle est universelle (6, 5–6), en accord avec ce qu'il est digne de penser de la puissance de la divinité, avec les philosophes, et avec ce que l'Apôtre (cf. Rm 10:12) dit du Fils, «Seigneur de tous». L'absence d'«envie», de φθόνος en lui réitère une doctrine bien ancrée chez les Grecs depuis au moins le *Phèdre* de Platon ⁴⁷ (7, 1–2), et prend la forme de l'appel universel formulé dans le Nouveau Testament. Clément réplique à une objection possible des philosophes, qui se fonderait sur la différence entre le Père et le Fils: «Il ne pourrait jamais non plus être empêché par un autre, lui le Seigneur de tous les êtres, d'autant moins qu'il sert la volonté du Père bon et tout-puissant (cf. Mt 7:21; 12:50; Jn 6:40)». ⁴⁸ C'est l'occasion d'introduire la croyance chrétienne en l'existence d'une puissance ennemie et de la rendre compatible avec l'affirmation de la toute-puissance divine, l'«autre», c'est-à-dire le diable, étant assez déficient pour envier la condition des hommes (7, 2). Le Sauveur, qui a revêtu la chair passible de l'homme, est tout le contraire du μισάνθρωπος (8, 1). Il a fait voir «la bonté du seul et unique vrai Dieu tout-puissant». ⁴⁹

Les vertus de «douceur» et d'«amour des hommes» sont associées à la θεοσέβεια, qualifiée en 13, 4 de «magnifique», sans doute parce qu'elle surpasse celle des philosophes. La liaison est justifiée par la description de ce qu'est «le soin rendu à Dieu», Clément définissant ailleurs (*Strom.* IV 163, 4) la «piété (ὁσιότης)» comme «le soin de Dieu»: ce soin «tend au salut des hommes en vertu de la sollicitude de la bienfaisance à notre égard, c'est-à-dire par le service, l'enseignement et la charité en acte». ⁵⁰ Tatjana Alekniené a montré comment ces représentations se construisent sur le fond des questions et des paradoxes soulevés dans l'*Euthyphron* et réexaminés dans l'*Apologie de Socrate*. ⁵¹ La θεοσέβεια est, de cette façon, le culte qui convient à Dieu, en ce qu'il est en accord avec la doctrine correcte sur la divinité, condition de la véritable piété, selon un principe resté implicite dans l'*Euthyphron*, et présent dans tout le discours éthique de Platon. ⁵² C'est ainsi que la piété, qui imite la sollicitude divine, la douceur et l'amour des hommes sont «les règles de l'assimilation gnostique». ⁵³

⁴⁶ *Strom.* VII 5, 6.

⁴⁷ Voir aussi *Timée* 29e.

⁴⁸ *Strom.* VII 7, 1; cf. 7, 7.

⁴⁹ *Strom.* VII 12, 1.

⁵⁰ *Strom.* VII 13, 2.

⁵¹ Alekniené, «La piété véritable», 452–453.

⁵² Alekniené, «La piété véritable», 456.

⁵³ *Strom.* VII 13, 4.

Un motif platonicien fameux est à son tour élevé, au gré de Clément, au niveau du culte prescrit et symbolisé par les « paroles prophétiques », les voies chrétiennes de l'assimilation à Dieu, par l'imitation du Fils, et par la collaboration à son œuvre salvatrice, devenant le rituel qui rend l'offrande « agréée » (14, 1). Dès le début de la première partie du livre VII, ce motif est au centre de l'argumentation : « le service de Dieu consiste donc pour le gnostique à se soucier constamment de son âme et à s'occuper de ce qui est divin en lui en vertu de l'amour continuel ».⁵⁴ Les allusions au *Timée* (90 c) et à l'*Apologie de Socrate* (30b1-2)⁵⁵ sont modifiées par l'addition « en vertu de l'amour continuel (κατὰ τὴν ἀδιάλειπτον ἀγάπην) ». Amour pour Dieu et amour pour les hommes. Cette union indissociable est soulignée rhétoriquement par la formule qui est au centre du passage suivant, sur le gnostique « assistant de Dieu ».⁵⁶ « Car seul est pieux celui qui est bel et bien soumis sans défaillance (ἀνεπιλήπτως) à Dieu dans le soin des choses humaines ». L'amour est aussitôt réaffirmé, sous l'aspect de l'amitié de Dieu, dans la définition, peut-être d'origine stoïcienne, de la θεοπρέπεια : « l'état qui respecte ce qui convient à Dieu », dont la conséquence est que « seul le dévot est ami de Dieu (θεοφιλὴς ὁ θεοπρεπὴς μόνος) ». Clément joue sur le terme θεοπρεπής, « dévot », littéralement : « celui qui convient à Dieu », ou « qui est conforme à Dieu », pour faire du dévot véritable le détenteur d'une connaissance et d'une expérience de ce rapport éminent de convenue qu'est l'assimilation à Dieu (3, 6). « Ami de Dieu », le gnostique « aime Dieu » (4, 1). Il connaît aussi la relation d'amour entre le Père et le Fils, « car c'était lui la Sagesse dont se réjouissait (cf. Pr 8:30) le Dieu tout-puissant »,⁵⁷ de même que « l'amour suréminent pour l'homme » du Sauveur (8, 1), par l'intermédiaire duquel le seul et unique vrai Dieu tout-puissant sauve de tout temps et pour toujours (12, 1). La christianisation de l'ἔρως platonicien aboutit à cet énoncé très dense : « Or l'être aimé entraîne lui-même à le contempler tout être qui s'est voué complètement à la contemplation par l'amour propre à la connaissance ».⁵⁸ Cette contemplation est l'apanage des « âmes aimantes », dans le très beau passage, arraché à la règle du silence mystique (incarnée par une formule d'Euripide : « Je tais le reste »), qui transpose les mythes platoniciens du voyage des âmes dans le cadre de l'apocalyptique et qui s'achève par la définition de « l'activité du gnostique

⁵⁴ *Strom.* VII 3, 1, selon la traduction de T. Aleknienė, « La piété véritable », 453 et n. 31.

⁵⁵ Voir Aleknienė, « La piété véritable », 454.

⁵⁶ *Strom.* VII 3, 4.

⁵⁷ *Strom.* VII 7, 4.

⁵⁸ *Strom.* VII 10, 3.

devenu parfait»: «converser avec Dieu par l'intermédiaire du grand prêtre (cf. Hb 4:14), devenu semblable autant que possible⁵⁹ au Seigneur au moyen de tout le culte rendu à Dieu».⁶⁰

La θεοσέβεια digne de ce nom est caractérisée aussi par la «science droite», mentionnée dans le texte qui récapitule au moyen d'expressions scripturaires une grande part de l'enseignement antérieur, en 14, 1. Le «cœur sans orgueil», on l'a déjà rappelé, est celui de Socrate qui, à la recherche de lui-même, préférerait être «un animal plus doux⁶¹ et plus simple» que Typhon, un animal qui participerait, «de nature, à une destinée divine où n'entrent point les fumées de l'orgueil»,⁶² un Socrate qui a donné congé aux fables des Grecs.⁶³ il n'est pas impossible que Clément ait tiré de ce contexte de l'étymologie donnée par Platon au nom «Typhon» la mention de la «science droite». Celle-ci, en l'occurrence, est la doctrine exacte sur Dieu, propre au christianisme. Il serait trop long d'en énumérer les éléments présentés dans les exposés précédents du livre VII, en précisant de façon détaillée les adaptations chrétiennes des thèmes philosophiques. Retenons surtout que le Fils apparaît comme celui qui enseigne «la cause transcendante» (2, 3; cf. 4, 3) et comme «le pouvoir du Père» (9, 1), «la cause de tous les biens par la volonté du Père tout-puissant» (8, 5) et, à ce titre, l'acteur de la providence divine, tant pour le gouvernement de l'univers (5, 4) que pour le sort des êtres humains, par l'instruction (5, 6–7) et le salut qu'elle confère à ceux qui l'accueillent (10, 1–12, 5). Notons que Clément souligne l'excellence de l'action du Fils dans ce rôle, bien supérieure à celle du «pilote de l'univers» dans le mythe du *Politique* (272e)⁶⁴ en ce qu'«elle accomplit tout avec une puissance infatigable et inlassable»;⁶⁵ en outre, la relation entre le démiurge du *Timée*, fabriquant l'univers les regards fixés sur ce qui est éternel, le Vivant-en-soi,⁶⁶ est transférée à l'activité providentielle du Fils, «l'autorité la plus élevée ..., qui a le regard fixé, à travers son action, sur les pensées cachées» (du Père).⁶⁷ Remarquons aussi que le dis-

⁵⁹ Cf. Platon, *Rép.* X 613 b; *Théét.* 176 b.

⁶⁰ *Strom.* VII 13, 1–2.

⁶¹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 13, 4.

⁶² Platon, *Phèdre* 230a.

⁶³ Platon, *Phèdre* 229b–230a.

⁶⁴ Voir *Strom.* VII 5, 5.

⁶⁵ *Strom.* VII 5, 4; cf. 9, 1–2.

⁶⁶ Voir *Timée* 28a6–7; 29a2–6.

⁶⁷ *Strom.* VII 5, 4. Dans ce passage, Clément ne recherche plus les emprunts des philosophes à l'Écriture, comme en *Strom.* V 93, 4–94, 2, à propos du modèle intelligible (voir Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung*, 308), mais il christianise la philosophie, en insistant

cours grec sur les degrés d'instruction, sur l'élite et sur la liberté de choix⁶⁸ est transposé dans la doctrine de la pédagogie du Fils par les descriptions de la hiérarchie allant de l'incroyant au gnostique.⁶⁹ Retenons encore que Clément, dans sa théologie christianisant celle des Grecs, fait une place à l'Esprit Saint, qui personnifie la force d'attraction de l'amour (10, 3), à partir de la comparaison platonicienne avec « l'esprit de la pierre d'Héraclée » (9, 4), selon une représentation qui peut évoquer le passage fameux sur « les mystères de l'amour » du traité *Quel riche sera sauvé ?* (37, 1-3). Le comble de cet amour est l'incarnation du Logos (8, 1). Toutefois, selon la méthode conçue pour l'apprentissage des philosophes, Clément limite le sens de cette venue dans la chair à la manifestation exemplaire d'une vie parfaitement conforme aux commandements (8, 6).

Ainsi le recours aux « paroles prophétiques » elles-mêmes en 14, 1 a-t-il été longuement préparé par la transformation de la théologie des philosophes, platoniciens pour l'essentiel. Un autre terme scripturaire, *ὁλοκάρπωμα*, dans le même passage, vient condenser des thèmes sous-jacents dans cette première partie du livre, esquissés, voire implicites, dans les exposés qui précèdent, plus nettement exprimés dans la suite; ces thèmes concernent l'intégrité du gnostique, totalement voué à Dieu par l'assimilation au Seigneur; certains des textes où ils figurent ont été déjà mentionnés (3, 1.4.6; 8, 5: « ceux qui sont rendus parfaits par le moyen de la foi; 10, 1: « l'homme parfait »; 13, 1: « les âmes saintes »); d'autres, plus clairs, apparaissent ensuite (16, 5-6; 27, 4: « La pureté réelle n'est autre que l'abstention des fautes »; 29, 5-6, sur le gnostique, « dans lequel Dieu a pris place »; 32, 5; 35-36; 38, 4; 40, 3; 42, 3; 44, 5; 44, 7; 45, 2; 46, 9-47, 3, sur « la vertu inamissible » du gnostique; 49, 1. 4; 49, 8; 50, 3; 52, 3, sur le gnostique, « statue animée du Seigneur »; 54, 1). La sainteté totale qui fait que le gnostique, « offrande agréée » en raison de ses vertus, est *ὁλοκάρπωμα* de Dieu est la traduction scripturaire de l'unité du sage, telle qu'elle a déjà été assimilée par Clément, dans sa version néopythagoricienne, en *Strom.* IV 152, 1. À l'arrière-plan se profile peut-être aussi l'image de Socrate, déjà évoquée à propos du « cœur sans orgueil », souhaitant être « un animal plus doux (*ἡμερώτερον*)⁷⁰ et plus simple (*ἀπλούστερον*) » que Typhon.⁷¹ Cette simplicité est en accord avec

sur la transcendance mystérieuse, « cachée », de la volonté et de l'action divine (cf. Sir 16:21; 43:32).

⁶⁸ Platon, *République* X 617e.

⁶⁹ *Strom.* VII 5, 6-6, 6; 9, 3-10, 3; 11, 2; 12, 1-3, 13, 4.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Strom.* VII 13, 4.

⁷¹ Platon, *Phèdre* 230a.

«l'unité sans différence» (dans le langage des philosophes) qui est le privilège de «l'homme élevé à la sainteté»;⁷² Clément accorde en effet parfois à l'ἀπλότης la haute valeur qui lui est reconnue dans la tradition juive hellénistique et le premier christianisme.⁷³ Quant à l'illumination qui accompagne cette élévation à la sainteté, elle apparaît dans le même texte biblique que ὁλοκάρπωμα, en Sg 3:6, non sans lien avec le φωτισμός qu'est le baptême, relié peut-être, dans sa signification à la fois première et ultime, au «temps de la visite» reçue par les justes, d'après Sg 3:7. Elle transpose en même temps dans ce langage à la fois nouveau et d'une antiquité vénérable pour Clément l'évocation, faite plus haut, en termes platoniciens, de «la vision d'une clarté extrême et d'une parfaite limpidité»,⁷⁴ qui rappelle la citation du *Phèdre* 250b–c faite en *Strom.* V 138, 3.⁷⁵ Quant à la purification qui fait accéder à l'impassibilité de l'être devenu totalement un, une perfection prônée par les platoniciens et promue par Clément à leur suite au rang de qualité inhérente à l'assimilation à Dieu (13, 3; cf. 7, 2.5), elle était indiquée de façon énigmatique, dit-il, par la Loi (14, 3), expliquée par les ordres de «l'Évangile et de l'Apôtre» (14, 2).

La référence explicite aux «paroles prophétiques», tout en complétant l'enseignement antérieur sur l'impassibilité de l'être humain vraiment pieux, ouvre cette fois un développement nouveau sur le culte authentique, qui va utiliser la critique philosophique de la «superstition grecque»⁷⁶ et l'interprétation allégorique de l'Écriture pour construire à partir d'elles une piété qui serait une «science des sacrifices» compatible avec une conception rationnelle de la divinité et avec le «christianisme», qui aboutit aux réflexions sur la consécration de la statue dédiée à Dieu qu'est le gnostique (29, 7–8; 52, 1–3) et sur le sacrifice des orants (31, 7–8; 32, 4–5; 34, 2; 49, 4), jusqu'au traité sur la prière (35, 1–49, 8). En définissant ce culte spirituel, Clément exploite les efforts qu'ont faits les philosophes (et d'abord Platon lui-même) pour sortir du cercle dans lequel Socrate avait enfermé Euthyphron en l'amenant à considérer la piété comme un troc entre les dieux et les hommes (*Euth.* 14e). Il cherche en effet d'emblée à défendre le culte qui convienne à un Dieu exempt de besoin et dénué de passion (14, 2–5) et à en trouver la réalité dans la θεοσέβεια du gnostique. Rappelons ici

⁷² *Strom.* VII 14, 1.

⁷³ Voir *Protr.* 106, 3; 111, 1; *Paed.* I 12, 4; 14, 2.4; 15, 2; 19, 3; 39, 1; *Strom.* V 30, 3, et Joseph Amstutz, *ΑΠΛΟΤΗ* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1968).

⁷⁴ *Strom.* VII 13, 1.

⁷⁵ La métaphore du «festin de la vision» vient aussi du *Phèdre* 247e4.

⁷⁶ *Strom.* VII 22, 3.

simplement que la solution de Clément réside dans la nature de l'échange (ἀμοιβή) entre le bienfaiteur divin et l'« ami » qu' est le gnostique,⁷⁷ échange conçu comme la modalité vivante de l'assimilation à Dieu (21, 1–5), par une « conversation » (42, 1) qui préserve dans une union dynamique l'autonomie des deux partenaires : « Car la piété du gnostique est un retour à elle-même (ἀντεπιστροφή) de la pensée providentielle et une réponse (ἀντίστροφος) de la pensée affectueuse de Dieu » (42, 3).

Mais avant de construire ce modèle, en associant la religion des philosophes à la doctrine de l'ἀγάπη, l'apologiste a dû faire face à deux graves difficultés. Il lui a fallu d'abord absoudre la Loi de l'accusation de violence, là où elle édicte la mise à mort des coupables. Il l'a fait en usant de l'allégorie, par le rapprochement avec des paroles du Nouveau Testament qui assimilent la mort à la libération de l'emprise des fautes (14, 2–4). Cet argument était censé calmer les philosophes, eux-mêmes allégoristes. Il lui a fallu surtout affronter le scandale le plus grand, l'immolation du Fils. De même qu'il a interprété, dans ce contexte, l'incarnation du Seigneur comme le moyen de révéler aux hommes, dans « la chair passible », la voie de salut consistant à imiter son obéissance parfaite aux commandements (8, 1.6), de même a-t-il choisi de tirer une leçon morale du sacrifice qui est au centre du christianisme ; sans doute en affirmant : « nous ne sacrifions pas (οὐ θύομεν) à Dieu qui est exempt de besoin, lui qui a fait don à tous de toutes choses » et en mentionnant aussitôt « celui qui a été immolé pour nous (τὸν δ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἱερευθέντα) », ⁷⁸ laisse-t-il entendre que cette immolation est, mystérieusement, le couronnement de ces dons, mais il ne s'attarde pas à méditer sur ce point ; il reste au niveau de la lecture proposée en 14, 2 et il présente la suppression des désirs et des passions comme substitut de l'offrande répondant à cette consécration sacrificielle inouïe et comme louange en acte : « ... nous rendons gloire à celui qui a été immolé pour nous en nous immolant nous-mêmes par l'absence de besoin à l'intention de l'être exempt de besoin ». ⁷⁹ Les philosophes pouvaient ne pas être insensibles, tout en restant réfractaires à l'immolation en cause, à l'enseignement sur l'impassibilité et sur la conjonction entre celle de l'être humain et celle de la divinité, si Clément les invitait à se reporter à des textes comme *Timée* 90a–d. ⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Voir Aleknienė, « La piété véritable », 457.

⁷⁸ *Strom.* VII 14, 5.

⁷⁹ *Strom.* VII 14, 5.

⁸⁰ Voir *Strom.* V 96, 2, citant *Timée* 90d4–7, et Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung*, 176, qui indique les parallèles médio-platoniciens.

Mais l'apologiste fait ici plus de concessions à la philosophie qu'au « christianisme ».⁸¹

Si l'on revient à l'intrusion de références à l'Ancien Testament dans un exposé censé utiliser la culture des philosophes en donnant une description du « christianisme » à l'aide du Nouveau Testament, on peut considérer que l'insertion de la « Loi » en 14, 3–4 est strictement ponctuelle, pour répondre au passage à une objection éventuelle. Il reste que les fragments scripturaires introduits auparavant (14, 1) le sont bien antérieurement à la fin des développements sur la piété authentique à l'usage des philosophes. Cependant, comme nous l'avons vu, ils viennent clore une première étape, où l'adaptation chrétienne des thèmes platoniciens a préparé la manifestation des « paroles prophétiques ».

Transition vers les exposés suivants

Si ce passage récapitule, au moyen de formules scripturaires, les éléments déjà évoqués d'une piété digne de ce nom, et souligne les acquis du premier temps de la démonstration, il sert aussi de transition à l'élaboration de thèmes complémentaires, le rejet des sacrifices et l'offrande de la prière, thèmes qui sont à leur tour traités principalement à partir du discours philosophique. Pour mieux établir les bases de sa doctrine sur ces sujets, Clément réaffirme tout d'abord la saine conception de Dieu, en récusant des erreurs, sous la forme d'un résumé des critiques développées par Platon au livre X des *Lois* (15, 1–4). Il aboutit à une déclaration monothéiste qui associe un mot du langage philosophique, *ταῦτότης*, à un vocable scripturaire, *ἀγαθωσύνη*, qu'il choisit pour désigner un attribut essentiel de la divinité pour des philosophes platoniciens (15, 4 : « ... seul existe le vrai Dieu qui demeure dans l'identité de sa justice et de sa bonté »). La piété étant un échange entre les êtres humains et Dieu, Clément rappelle aussi, en des termes platoniciens, la conduite qui sied aux dévots d'une divinité immuablement juste et bonne (15, 1 ; cf. 22, 2) et il se réfère à la formule fameuse de la *République* X 617e, « la vertu n'a point de maître » (16, 2–3 ; 20, 7), pour édicter

⁸¹ Cette discrétion relative de Clément sur l'immolation du Fils, liée par lui ici au modèle de l'impassibilité, va de pair avec son penchant à ne pas insister prioritairement sur la corporéité du Christ dans l'Incarnation, tout en la reconnaissant. L'idéal de perfection éthique et spirituelle l'amène à construire un modèle christologique qui oriente surtout l'attention vers le Logos divin dans l'Incarnation, pour rendre plausible l'assimilation à Dieu de l'être humain, comme le rappelle Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria on Trial. The Evidence of 'Heresy' from Photius' Bibliotheca* (VChr Suppl. 101 ; Leiden/Boston : Brill, 2010), 95–111.

les règles du comportement gnostique et définir la connaissance et la vertu véritables (17, 1–20, 8). Le motif platonicien de l'assimilation à Dieu reste le moteur de la réflexion, sur le plan théorique (16, 1–6) et pratique (21, 2–4). Il est transformé par le passage de textes poétiques grecs⁸² à l'allusion à Gn 1:26, et reçoit une expression chrétienne lorsque Clément peut écrire : « elle occupe le troisième rang l'image divine, devenue dans la mesure du possible semblable à la seconde cause » (16, 6); la référence à la philosophie demeure très forte, par l'identification du « Monogène » à « la seconde cause », précisée ensuite à propos du « travail » de la connaissance (17, 2). Dans ce contexte, Clément n'a pas recours explicitement à d'autres paroles de l'Ancien Testament. Une simple allusion au gouvernement de Moïse (16, 4), qui résume des développements de Philon exploités dans le livre I des *Stromates*,⁸³ introduit un modèle susceptible d'être reconnu par les Grecs, grâce à la manière dont est présenté l'exercice de son pouvoir. Le progrès obtenu par l'argumentation permet en même temps de préciser le rôle attribué à la philosophie grecque au début du livre VII : « Quant à la philosophie grecque, elle fournit à l'âme comme une purification et une accoutumance préliminaires pour l'accueil de la foi, sur laquelle la vérité édifie la connaissance ».⁸⁴

La louange du gnostique vient aussitôt se confondre avec une célébration de la victoire de la piété chrétienne, dans son concours avec celle des philosophes, au moyen des images pauliniennes du combat de l'athlète, elles-mêmes empruntées au monde grec, qui se mêlent à une allusion à la deuxième partie de la formule de la *République* X 617e, à une interprétation du « Connais-toi toi-même » et à une étymologie philosophique d'« Adrastée ».⁸⁵

Après la solution de l'aporie opposée par Socrate à Euthyphron, qui consiste à définir la nature de « la seule réponse vraiment ajustée, de la part des hommes »,⁸⁶ Clément développe le thème introduit à la faveur des emprunts aux « paroles prophétiques » faits dans le texte charnière de

⁸² Notamment le fragment « Statue divine et semblable à Dieu » en 16, 5; voir Marguerite Harl, « Socrate-Silène. Les emplois métaphoriques d'ἄγαλμα et le verbe ἀγαλματοφορέω de Platon à Philon d'Alexandrie et aux Pères grecs », *Semitica et classica* 2 (2009) 51–72 (ici 60–64).

⁸³ Voir Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and his Use of Philo in the Stromates. An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (VChr Suppl. 3; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1988), 54–62 (*Strom.* I 150–182).

⁸⁴ *Strom.* VII 20, 2.

⁸⁵ *Strom.* VII 20, 7–8.

⁸⁶ *Strom.* VII 21, 3. Voir Aleknienè, « La piété véritable », 457.

14, 1.3–4, à savoir le rejet des sacrifices. Il l'insère d'abord dans la polémique plus générale contre la « superstition », pour montrer que le gnostique est vraiment l'homme « religieux et exempt de superstition (καὶ θεοσεβῆς καὶ ἀδαισίδαίμων) ».⁸⁷ Ajoutant quelques remarques à l'ample diatribe du *Protreptique* (22, 3–23, 1), l'argumentation reprend la méthode annoncée dans le prologue. L'un des procédés consiste à exploiter les railleries des Grecs eux-mêmes contre la δαισισταμονία (22, 1–27, 1) et à lui opposer la pureté authentique selon les philosophes, celle de la conscience (27, 2–6). Aucune citation des « paroles prophétiques » n'apparaît donc dans ce premier temps de la reprise. Des échos du prologue se font entendre dans la conclusion. L'« opinion athée » (27, 6) est devenue celle des Grecs (cf. 1, 1). La méthode appliquée, cependant, a permis de distinguer cet athéisme de la religion des philosophes (cf. 20, 2), qui use de « la raison droite » et de ses « rites de purification ».⁸⁸ La critique philosophique de la « superstition » peut tourner les âmes qui en sont ainsi libérées « vers la mémorisation des points de première importance (ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν προηγουμένων κεφαλαίων ὑπόμνησιν) ».⁸⁹ Les philosophes, eux, étaient capables, d'emblée, de recevoir une « description sommaire (κεφαλαιωδῶς) du christianisme ».⁹⁰ Leur contribution à la purification des âmes est ici soulignée, au milieu de l'exposé sur la piété véritable.

Avant d'en venir précisément à la piété comme « science du sacrifice », en l'occurrence comme connaissance de l'offrande substituée par les chrétiens aux sacrifices, ce sont encore des critiques des philosophes, cette fois contre les sanctuaires et contre les statues, que Clément utilise en faveur du « christianisme », afin de montrer ce qu'est le véritable enclos sacré (cf. 16, 5) : l'Église, collectivement, et l'âme juste, « statue divine ».⁹¹ Les philosophes bénéficient alors d'une promotion ; il faut sans doute les déceler sous la périphrase « ceux qui sont capables de devenir » gnostiques, « même s'ils ne sont pas encore dignes de recevoir la science de Dieu ».⁹² Et Clément de conclure : « Car quiconque est sur le point d'avoir la foi est déjà fidèle à Dieu et c'est une place établie en son honneur, statue parfaite, dédiée à Dieu ».⁹³ Cet exposé (28–29), tout empreint de la religiosité des milieux philosophiques

⁸⁷ *Strom.* VII 22, 2.

⁸⁸ On est très près d'une interprétation philosophique du « culte raisonnable » de Rm 12:1.

⁸⁹ *Strom.* VII 27, 6.

⁹⁰ *Strom.* VII 1, 3.

⁹¹ *Strom.* VII 29, 3–7.

⁹² *Strom.* VII 29, 7.

⁹³ *Strom.* VII 29, 8.

contemporains de Clément, et fort d'un raisonnement dialectique et aporétique sur l'impossibilité de localiser la divinité (28, 5–29, 1), est dépourvu de citations scripturaires. Même le terme « fait de main d'homme (χειροποίητος) » (28, 1) n'est pas exclusivement biblique. Quant à la réminiscence, en 28, 2, d'Is 66:1–2 (cf. Ac 7:48–49), elle correspond au « sens » du texte scripturaire, en l'occurrence une représentation philosophique de la relation entre Dieu et l'univers, sans en donner la lettre, en conformité avec la règle édictée dans le prologue (1, 4).

Lorsque Clément en vient précisément à la question des sacrifices, il procède de la même manière: l'emprunt aux poètes et aux philosophes grecs de la critique des sacrifices, sous la forme particulière de l'offrande de nourriture, sert à dénoncer des absurdités (30, 1–6; 31, 9–32, 3; 32, 5–34, 1) et à établir la dignité des seules offrandes qui conviennent, la prière de louange (31, 7–8; 32, 4–5; 34, 2–4) et la purification personnelle (32, 7; 34, 2). La mention explicite de la « Loi », en 32, 7, et en 33, 4, est du même type que celle de 14, 3: le propos est de répondre à une objection et le sens allégorique est analogue, l'intention retenue dans les deux cas étant la purgation des passions ou du plaisir. Comme dans le passage antérieur aussi, l'interprétation allégorique est sous l'influence du discours philosophique associant piété et recherche de l'impassibilité. L'emprise de ce discours est même ici plus forte, dans la mesure où le relais néotestamentaire est absent et où la documentation grecque sur l'alimentation est exceptionnellement précise (références à Pythagore, Xénocrate, Polémon, Platon le comique, Ésope, Cléanthe, Androcyde et, sans qu'il soit nommé, Théophraste: 32, 5.8.9; 33, 2.3.7; 34, 2). C'est à la fin de l'exposé sur les sacrifices, pour définir ce qu'est l'offrande véritable, que Clément rétablit la hiérarchie entre la piété des chrétiens et celle des philosophes, au profit de la première: un précepte de Théophraste est remplacé par une allégorisation du parfum composé d'Ex 30:34–37 qui, en faisant du sacrifice authentique la prière du peuple chrétien, résume la doctrine de Clément sur « le don des alliances »⁹⁴ et réunit en même temps les éléments qui composent la piété: prière de louange, pureté de l'intelligence et rectitude du mode de vie (34, 2). La dernière phrase, greffée sur un mot d'un fragment poétique grec contre les sacrifices (« de la bile passée au feu—πυρουμένη »), a la même

⁹⁴ Voir Alain Le Boulluec, « Le christianisme en autodéfinition chez Clément d'Alexandrie », in Nicole Belayche et Simon C. Mimouni (éds.), *Entre lignes de partage et territoires de passage. Les identités religieuses dans les mondes grec et romain* (Collection de la Revue des Études Juives; Paris/Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 437–458.

force d'affirmation identitaire que l'ouverture du texte charnière de 14, 1, concernant déjà « l'offrande agréée », et convertit « le feu intelligent » des stoïciens en feu purificateur du baptême, avec une allusion à Is 43:2, elle-même passée au crible de paroles du Nouveau Testament.

Nous constatons ainsi de nouveau que Clément, à l'intérieur du grand développement sur la piété, se donne le droit de recourir à la « prophétie », parfois discrètement, et parfois de façon appuyée, dans les passages qui ponctuent l'exposé, qui achèvent un chapitre du sujet à traiter et qui servent de transition vers un autre. Il peut le faire sans enfreindre la règle générale énoncée dans le prologue, car chaque fois ce recours aux « témoignages » est préparé par une réflexion ancrée dans la « culture » des philosophes grecs.

Il serait trop long de soumettre au même genre d'analyse ce qu'on peut appeler le traité sur la prière, annoncé et esquissé plus tôt (en 13, 2; 14, 5; 31, 7-8; 32, 4) et introduit en 34, 2. Notons seulement une variation dans l'ordre des arguments : cette fois l'autorité de la parole prophétique (Ps 118:164.172) devance (35, 2) la transcription du discours philosophique sur la « fête » qu'est la vie de chaque jour ainsi que sur la sobriété et sur l'action de grâce (Ps 118:66 en 36, 1). Quant aux autres références à la « prophétie », elles sont intimement intégrées, sous forme implicite, à une réflexion dont l'origine première est philosophique (ainsi en 37, 3-5; 39, 6; 49, 7), ou bien étroitement liées, sous forme explicite, à des représentations courantes chez les philosophes ou à des coutumes religieuses grecques (ainsi en 37, 6 et 43, 7-8). Remarquons que les allusions (discrètes) à l'Ancien Testament se font plus denses à la fin du traité (49, 7).

Les deux derniers exposés traitent de deux usages de la parole en relation avec la piété et la vertu en acte, le serment (50, 1-51, 8) et la prédication (52, 1-54, 1). Les préceptes concernant le serment se fondent sur des définitions et une casuistique grecques. Le portrait du maître gnostique comme « statue animée du Seigneur » ne se réfère pas à l'Ancien Testament et les remarques subtiles sur le mensonge renvoient pour modèle à Paul, non sans exploiter un concept grec, la *συμπεριφορά*, « l'attention aux circonstances » (53, 4).

Après la conclusion de la première partie, en 54, 4, la perfection du gnostique culmine dans l'état suprême des « dieux », par une référence manifeste à Ps 81:6⁹⁵ qui récapitule, en 56, 6, les évocations antérieures, destinées aux philosophes, des sommets de la contemplation promis aux âmes

⁹⁵ Voir Annewies van den Hoek, « « I said, you are Gods ... ». The Significance of Psalm 82 for Some Early Christian Authors », in L.V. Rutgers et al. (eds.), *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World* (Leuven : Peeters, 1998), 203-219.

saintes,⁹⁶ et qui permet de parler de «l'égalité avec les anges».⁹⁷ C'est alors qu'est fourni le «témoignage» choisi, Ps 23:3–6, qui fait écho fortement au prologue.⁹⁸ Il condense tout l'enseignement délivré dans la première partie sur la relation établie par la piété authentique entre le dévot et Dieu et il introduit la partie proprement éthique (59–88). Il convient surtout ici de remarquer l'importance accordée par Clément à une formule du dernier verset de la citation scripturaire, «la face du Dieu de Jacob» (Ps 23:6b), et soulignée en grec par l'asyndète: «Le prophète, je le pense, a désigné là de manière concise le gnostique; *mais* David nous a montré au passage, semble-t-il, que le Sauveur est Dieu, en l'appelant *la face du Dieu de Jacob*, lui qui a donné l'Évangile et l'enseignement sur le Père».⁹⁹ C'est le «témoignage» qui vient soutenir toutes les mentions de la divinité du Fils présentes dans la première partie, un élément essentiel, doctrinal, de la description du «christianisme». C'est aussi l'exemple qui illustre enfin la thèse énoncée sans preuve au début du livre: «Qu'il soit le Fils de Dieu, et que ce soit lui le Sauveur et le Seigneur que nous disons, les prophéties divines le montrent clairement».¹⁰⁰ La révélation chrétienne comme Fils de Dieu de celui que les philosophes grecs appelleraient «principe intemporel et sans principe» est confirmée «dans l'ordre de l'enseignement», par «la philosophie très ancienne et la très auguste prophétie».¹⁰¹ L'argument fondé sur l'antiquité de l'autorité prophétique pour établir, à l'intention des philosophes grecs désormais suffisamment informés, l'identité du Fils désigné par le «christianisme» et du Seigneur annoncé par la «prophétie» consiste à souligner l'accord entre une expression néotestamentaire et les mots de David, en Ps 23:6, «la face du Dieu de Jacob»: «C'est pourquoi l'Apôtre a appelé le Fils empreinte de la gloire du Père (Hb 1:3)».¹⁰²

En somme, le programme défini dans le prologue ne s'accomplit pleinement qu'après l'achèvement de l'exposé qui devait montrer aux philosophes que seul était véritablement pieux le gnostique. Alors seulement le «christianisme», après avoir traduit et transformé dans son propre discours les propos des philosophes sur la piété, peut exhiber le sceau qui authentifie

⁹⁶ Cf. *Strom.* VII 10, 2; 12, 4; 13, 1–2; 14, 1; 16, 6; 29, 6; 40, 2; 43, 5; 44, 6–7; 45, 3; 46, 9; 47, 7; 49, 4.

⁹⁷ *Strom.* VII 57, 5.

⁹⁸ Cf. *Strom.* VII 58, 1–3 et 1, 3.

⁹⁹ *Strom.* VII 58, 3.

¹⁰⁰ *Strom.* VII 6, 2.

¹⁰¹ *Strom.* VII 2, 2.

¹⁰² *Strom.* VII 58, 4.

ce discours, la lettre même de la « prophétie ». De cette façon, le programme est respecté. Le travail de traduction mené dans la première partie progresse cependant par étapes. À un moment crucial de l'argumentation, Clément offre les prémices de la résolution finale en récapitulant les premiers acquis à l'aide de références à l'Ancien Testament, en 14, 1. Il sème ensuite, discrètement, des allusions à la « prophétie », qui ponctuent son exposé et relancent la recherche. Ces anticipations sont des signaux et servent à alerter le lecteur attentif.¹⁰³ Elles servent aussi un projet divergent par lequel, subrepticement, Clément sort de la route tracée. Sous-jacent à la démonstration annoncée, un enseignement qui va au-delà des philosophes grecs et des simples croyants chrétiens dessine les voies d'une initiation à la connaissance, conformément au cryptage dont l'auteur des *Stromates* parle à propos de son œuvre. Cet enseignement est à trouver dans le foisonnement des relations de sens produit par l'agencement des *capitula* analysé par André Méhat. La première partie du livre VII illustre elle aussi la singularité de cette autre méthode, qui court sous celle qui est affichée, et qui fait jouer l'intertextualité¹⁰⁴ entre les écrits des philosophes grecs, le Nouveau Testament et « les témoignages prophétiques ».

¹⁰³ Andrew C. Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (VChr Suppl. 97; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), 115–128, a réexaminé les déclarations de Clément sur sa façon d'écrire et de composer ses *Stromates* pour réserver au lecteur avisé les « semences de gnose ».

¹⁰⁴ La fécondité sémantique des *capitula* ne résulte pas en effet seulement des relations de sens internes qu'ils produisent, mais de l'effort que le lecteur est invité à faire pour construire le réseau des rapports possibles avec les contextes des citations ou allusions explicites. Un exemple en a été proposé ci-dessus, avec la part inéluctable de subjectivité propre à ce genre de recherche, à propos de *ὁλοκάρπωμα* en *Strom.* VII 14, 1: les paroles scripturaires sous-jacentes sont contaminées par les échos d'un passage du *Phèdre* (230a) de Platon.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA ON GOD'S
PROVIDENCE AND THE Gnostic's LIFE CHOICE:
THE CONCEPT OF *PRONOIA* IN THE *STROMATEIS*, BOOK VII¹

Silke-Petra Bergjan

Πρόνοια refers to a concept that is interconnected with a number of themes such as prayer and angels, theology and ethics, and there is enough material in the *Stromateis* to outline Clement's thinking about God's *pronoia*. In antiquity, Clement's name was connected to a treatise—*Peri pronoias*, or Περὶ προνοίας καὶ δικαιοκρασίας—² and it must have been plausible to think of Clement as someone who contributed to the discussion on *pronoia* in the first centuries AD. If we go through the fragments, especially those attributed to Clement in the *Codex Patmensis* 263, it is clear that there was a collection of definitions under Clement's name and that it was in part identified with a text titled *Peri pronoias*.³ These definitions are a good reason to address the question of the definitions of the word *pronoia* in the *Stromateis* of Clement.

1. CLEMENT'S CONCEPT OF *PRONOIA* IN ITS SEMANTIC CONTEXTS

From early antiquity onward, the texts show three distinct usages of the term *pronoia* in different semantic fields.⁴ Clement is familiar with all the three usages of the word, and they play a role in his comments on God's *pronoia*.

a. Pronoia used in the phrase ἐκ προνοίας, designating an action that is performed intentionally and voluntarily. An example of such an action can

¹ In the following the edition of Otto Stählin, Ludwig Früchtel and Ursula Treu: Clemens Alexandrinus, II (GCS 15; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985) and III (GCS 17; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970) will be used.

² Anastasius Sinaita, *Quaestiones et responsiones* (PG 28, 185; Richard/Munitz, CCSG 59).

³ See below, 90–92.

⁴ In distinguishing between these three meanings of *pronoia*, I am following my own remarks in Silke-Petra Bergjan, *Der fürsorgende Gott. Der Begriff ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ in der apologetischen Literatur der Alten Kirche* (AKG 81; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 15–80.

be a murder or any action for which someone bears responsibility. Intent is connected with premeditation, which is the prior weighing of alternatives or means to an end. ἐκ προνοίας is therefore attributed typically to the military commander or statesman when he analyzes a situation before battle and deliberates about the possible outcome of his actions.

Clement speaks of intentions. For example, he refers to those who have the intention to grant mercy but are not in the position to actually do so.⁵ Or another example: he calls those who deliberately alienate themselves from God by not obeying the Commandments “enemies of God.”⁶ Clement does not, however, use the phrase ἐκ προνοίας in his writings to mean ‘intentionally’; instead he speaks of κατὰ προαίρεσιν. In the example just mentioned, κατὰ προαίρεσιν appears next to βουλεύειν. Clement is, however, aware of the distinctions made by Aristotle in the *Eudemian Ethics*. Choice, acting out of free will (ἐκούσιος) without being forced by necessity, is an important theme in the *Stromateis*. Clement’s wording reveals the Aristotelian influence. In *Strom.* II 62, 1 Clement offers the following definition: τὸ δ’ ἐκούσιον ἢ τὸ κατ’ ὀρεξίν ἐστιν ἢ τὸ κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἢ τὸ κατὰ διάνοιαν. This definition is very close to a definition found in the *Eudemian Ethics*.⁷ The choice Clements repeatedly asks the gnostic to make has to be free and requires deliberation.

b. Pronoia designates the care a father has for his children and the ruler has for his subordinates. Here *pronoia* means the natural obligation of parents to take care of their children. It is conceived to be a natural law that the stronger being takes care of the weaker one. This makes it possible to speak of a *pronoia* of God, since God the creator takes care of the created, or more precisely guarantees the continued existence and maintenance of creation. Just as a father’s for his children and a king’s for his subjects, one speaks of the care of God for everything God created. For the most part, *pronoia* should be translated as ‘care.’⁸ It should be noted, however, that Clemens often does not use the word *pronoia* but rather such synonyms as ἐπιμέλεια⁹

⁵ *Strom.* IV 38, 1.

⁶ *Strom.* IV 94, 1.

⁷ Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. Eud.* 1223a23–25, Oxford Classical Texts, eds. R.R. Walzer and J.M. Mingay (Oxford: University Press, 1997): Πρῶτον σκεπτέον τὸ ἐκούσιον καὶ τὸ ἀκούσιον. τριῶν δὲ τούτων ἐν τι δόξειεν <ἀν> εἶναι, ἥτοι κατ’ ὀρεξίν ἢ κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἢ κατὰ διάνοιαν. Cf. *Eth. Eud.* 1226b17–18: δῆλον ὅτι ἡ προαίρεσις μὲν ἐστὶν ὀρεξὶς τῶν ἐφ’ αὐτῷ βουλευτική.

⁸ *Strom.* I 123, 5; III 79, 6; VII 70, 7; VII 86, 5.

⁹ *Strom.* VII 16, 1.

and *κηδεμών*,¹⁰ as well as metaphors related to this semantic field such as *shepherd* and *king*:¹¹

For the care (*πρόνοια*) that comes to us from God is not a service as would proceed from inferiors to superiors, but rather, in mercy for our weakness, the unmediated dispensations of *pronoia* work like the care of the shepherds for the sheep and of the king for his subjects.¹²

Here, the elements of the concept '*pronoia* as care' are spelled out in detail. The examples of the shepherd and the king are mentioned and stand for the hierarchy that essentially characterizes the notion of *pronoia*. This results in hierarchy of care¹³ that starts with the shepherd as a metaphor of God or logos and ultimately makes it possible to integrate the gnostic as well:

The shepherd, then, cares (*κήδεται*) for each one of his sheep, and above all the most direct care (*ἐπισκοπή*) is given to those of outstanding nature who are capable of being useful to the multitudes. Such are those who are able to lead and teach, through whom the working of *pronoia* is clearly made manifest whenever God wants to benefit human beings either by education, authority, or ordering of the world.¹⁴

Clement adds here the idea that God's *pronoia* is particularly directed towards the ruler. It enables him to assign to the gnostic a place in the hierarchy of practicing and receiving *pronoia*:

The gnostic, then, is pious when he cares for himself first and then for those who are near to him, in order that we may achieve the very best. The son gives delight to the good father by showing his zeal and resembling the father.¹⁵

'Caring for oneself' should be understood to mean care of the soul,¹⁶ and caring for one's neighbors to mean the imitation of God. At the end of

¹⁰ *Strom.* I 169, 2.

¹¹ Cf. also the metaphor of housekeeping, *Strom.* III 79, 6; VII 70, 7.

¹² *Strom.* VII 42, 7: οὐ γὰρ ὑπηρετική γέ ἐστιν [ἡ] εἰς ἡμᾶς θεόθεν ἡκουσα, οἷον ἐκ χειρόνων εἰς κρείττονας προϊούσα, ἡ πρόνοια, κατ' ἔλεον δὲ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀσθενείας αἱ προσεχείς τῆς προνοίας ἐνεργοῦνται οἰκονομίαι, καθάπερ καὶ ἡ τῶν ποιμένων εἰς τὰ πρόβατα καὶ ἡ τοῦ βασιλέως πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχομένους.

¹³ *Strom.* I 169, 1; II 115, 1.

¹⁴ *Strom.* VI 158, 1–2: ὁ γοῦν ποιμὴν καὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον κήδεται προβάτων, καὶ μάλιστα τοῦτοις σύνεστι προσεχεστέρα ἡ ἐπισκοπή, ὅσοι διαπρεπεῖς τὰς φύσεις τε καὶ δυνατοὶ τὰ πλήρη συνωφελεῖν ὑπάρχουσιν. οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν οἱ ἡγεμονικοὶ καὶ παιδευτικοί, δι' ὧν ἡ ἐνέργεια τῆς προνοίας ἀριδὴλως δέικνυται, ὁπηνίκα ἂν ἡ διὰ παιδείας ἢ δι' ἀρχῆς τινας καὶ διοικήσεως εὖ ποιεῖν ἐθέλῃ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὁ θεός.

¹⁵ *Strom.* VII 16, 1.

¹⁶ *Strom.* I 34, 1; IV 23, 2; VII 3, 1. On this motif, see Hildegard König. "Für sich und andere sorgen: Beobachtungen zu Seelsorgebegriff bei Clemens von Alexandrien," in *Origeniana*

the chain of *pronoia* stands the one for whom the gnostic cares. One basic question in assessing Clement's discussion on the subject of *pronoia* is how God's *pronoia* reaches human beings and in what way Clement recognizes a hierarchy of subjects who practice *pronoia*. This basic theme is inherent in the word *pronoia*.

c. The concept of *pronoia* has repeatedly been regarded as a Stoic concept. There is a third usage of the word that is connected with Stoic thinking. *Pronoia* appears in the semantic field of *diakosmesis* and *diataxis*—the cosmic order.

For example, Clement writes:

Strom. I 173, 5: δεῖ δὴ τὴν διοικοῦσαν πρόνοιαν κυρίαν τε εἶναι καὶ ἀγαθὴν.

Strom. IV 52, 4: καλῶς πάντα τὴν θείαν διοικεῖν πρόνοιαν πέπεισται ἡ ἀγάπη.¹⁷

Strom. VII 45, 3: πεπεισμένος εὖ μάλα παγκάλως διοικεῖσθαι τὰ πάντα καὶ εἰς τὸ ἄμεινον αἰετὴν προκοπὴν προΐεναι ταῖς ἀρετὴν ἐλομέναις ψυχαῖς.

This list could be extended. The ordering and forming of the world is ascribed to *pronoia*. *Pronoia* is said to be in the cosmos and to penetrate the universe.¹⁸ However, the term *pronoia* does not fit in this context without tension, because in most Stoic fragments it is rather the *pneuma* that penetrates the universe, and the Stoic metaphors are not originally associated with the concept of *pronoia*. The same holds for the connection of *diakosmesis* and *pronoia*, because a similar concept is attributed to the *heimarmene*: the *heimarmene* orders and is connected with the chain of cause and effect and the inexorable progression of things, the law and order of the cosmos. An unalterable necessity is found neither in the semantic field nor in the concept of *pronoia*. When speaking of the fact that the *pronoia* orders things, a qualitative aspect is addressed. The things that happen according to *pronoia* are understood to occur in a good and orderly fashion.

Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian tradition = Origene e la tradizione Alessandrina. Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27–31 August 2001, eds. Lorenzo Perrone, P. Bernardino and D. Marchini, 2 vols. (BETL 164; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 385–395. The author makes it clear that πρόνοια τῆς ψυχῆς is related to the German term *Seelsorge* (pastoral care).

¹⁷ See especially *Strom.* VII 5, 4. On this passage, see below, 82f. See also *Strom.* I 86, 1: κυβερνῶνται δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς καθόλου προνοίας ἐπὶ τέλος ὑγιεινόν, κἂν νοσοποιοὺς ᾗ ἡ αἰτία; *Strom.* II 4, 2: λέγει περί τινων ἐναντιοῦσθαι δοκούντων τῇ μιᾷ καὶ θεῇ τῇ προνοητικῇ διοικήσει. *Strom.* IV 148, 2: καλὴ γὰρ ἡ κτισθεῖσα δὴ οἰκονομία καὶ πάντα εὖ διοικεῖται, οὐδὲν ἀναιτίως γίνεται, ἐν τοῖς σοῖς εἶναι με δεῖ, παντοκράτωρ. *Strom.* VII 12, 2: πρὸς γὰρ τὴν τοῦ ὅλου σωτηρίαν τῷ τῶν ὅλων κυρίῳ πάντα ἐστὶ διατεταγμένα καὶ καθόλου καὶ ἐπὶ μέρους. *Strom.* VII 12, 3: πρὸς γὰρ τὴν σωτηρίαν τοῦ κρείττονος καὶ διαμονῆς ἀναλόγως τοῖς αὐτῶν ἡθεσι διοικεῖται καὶ τὰ μικρότερα.

¹⁸ *Strom.* VI 153, 4: αὐτίκα, φησίν, ἡ πρόνοια ἄνωθεν ἐκ τῶν προηγουμένων καθάπερ κεφαλῆς εἰς πάντας διήκει.

While the term *heimarmene* foregrounds the inalterability of the world order, the term *pronoia* causes the listener to think of a reasonably charitable action.¹⁹ One reads neither of an inescapable *pronoia* nor of a chain of causality that refers to *pronoia*. *Pronoia* is associated with the harmony in the mixture of opposites and with a cosmos in which there is room for different things.

If the flock spoken of figuratively by the Lord is nothing else than a herd of human beings, the same will be a good shepherd and lawgiver to the one herd of sheep that hear him. He will be the one caring for them, seeking the one that is lost and finding it with law and word, for the “law is spiritual” and leads to true blessedness.²⁰

The metaphor of the shepherd leads back to the second meaning of *pronoia*. Clement departs from the metaphor, however, when he identifies the shepherd and the lawgiver. The giving of the law refers to the cosmic magnanimity and ordering individuals together in harmony and unity; part of the harmony is the hierarchy of shepherd and flock, of king and subordinate, as well as the judicial assignment of each individual to his or her place. Clement leads from *pronoia* understood as God’s care to *pronoia* that orders the universe by the law, that is, by the cosmic order. One example of how the different meanings of the word flow together into the concept of the *pronoia* is given by Eusebius of Caesarea, quoting Arius Didymus:

Consequently one has to assume that God, who governs the universe, takes care of human beings. He is benevolent, gracious, philanthropic and just.²¹

Pronoia refers to the divine ordering of the world by the fatherly creator who takes care of the world. The goodness, which is connected to the concept of *pronoia* in its different meanings, is not an undifferentiated benevolence or benefaction of God.

¹⁹ Cf. the definition of *pronoia* by Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 42 (125, 4–9): “So let us say what providence is. Providence then is care for things by God. It is also defined as follows: providence is the wish of God by which all things receive a suitable way of life. But if providence is the wish of God there is every necessity that things should happen according to right reason, in the best way, most divinely and in the only way that they could be well, so that they could not be better arranged,” (ed. Moreno Morani, *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*; Leipzig: Teubner, 1987; trans. R.W. Sharples and P.J. van der Eijk, Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man*, Liverpool: University Press, 2008).

²⁰ *Strom.* I 169, 2.

²¹ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praep. ev.* XV 15, 5 (GCS 43/2) = *SVF* II 528 (169, 30–32): οἷς ἀκολούθως νομιστέον προνοεῖν τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν τὰ ὅλα διοικοῦντα θεόν, εὐεργετικὸν ὄντα καὶ χρηστὸν καὶ φιλόανθρωπον δίκαιόν τε καὶ πάσας ἔχοντα τὰς ἀρετάς.

One line of tradition adds the thought that goodness is essentially good in the sense of justice. Nothing arbitrary or unpredictable clings to the concept of *pronoia*. Rather, *pronoia* can be calculated according to its justice. Clement writes: it is not fate or coincidence; the gnostic is rather convinced that everything is well governed by *pronoia*.²² Clement interprets this to mean that everything is ordained and governed by *pronoia* and hence by justice.

2. PRONOIA AND JUSTICE: GNOSTICS AND MARTYRS EXPERIENCING GOD'S PRONOIA

Pronoia is an expression of the presence of the good creator and at the same time of a judge who implements justice. The importance of this relationship for Clement cannot be overestimated:

Of necessity the *pronoia* that administers all is powerful and good. Its power dispenses salvation in two ways: as our sovereign it brings us to our senses through punishment; as benefactress, it helps us by positive action for us.²³

Pronoia in the sense of the ordering principle of the universe is said to be both: the 'punishing judge' as well as the 'good father.' This is possible because punishment leads to a good end—namely, to the salvation of those who are educated by God (*paideia*). In this context Clement is not thinking of the eye of Dike²⁴ or of Dike who follows God and exercises her punishment or revenge.²⁵ Moreover, in his writings Clement repeatedly employs a concept of punishment that is clearly Platonic.²⁶ Punishment is not allowed to be based on concerns of revenge but is rather the task of the politician who intends to achieve correction, improvement, fear, or deterrence by means of punishment: κόλασις δὲ <δικαία> οὖσα διόρθωσις ἐστὶ ψυχῆς.²⁷ The law as such operates by threatening punishments and teaches us to fear punishments. It punishes the transgressors of the law and brings them back to the path of virtue. The incurables, who are resistant to all such efforts,

²² See especially *Strom.* IV 52, 2–4.

²³ *Strom.* I 173, 5: δεῖ δὴ τὴν διοικοῦσαν πρόνοιαν κυρίαν τε εἶναι καὶ ἀγαθὴν. ἀμφοῖν γὰρ ἡ δύναμις οἰκονομεῖ σωτηρίαν, ἡ μὲν κολάσει σωφρονίζουσα ὡς κυρία, ἡ δὲ δι' εὐποιίας χρηστευομένη ὡς εὐεργέτις.

²⁴ *Strom.* V 121, 1.

²⁵ Plato, *Leg.* IV 715e–716a, quoted in *Strom.* II 132, 2.

²⁶ *Prot.* 324b, *Leg.* XI 934a, *Gorg.* 477a–479a, *Pol.* 591a.

²⁷ *Strom.* I 168, 3.

are ultimately destroyed by the law.²⁸ But this should not be understood in the sense of revenge,²⁹ since this judgment too is supposed to provide a warning example for the others. Thus, punishment causes, very Platonically, either deterrence or improvement. In either case, the punishment has a goal or intention, and Clement is convinced that punishment is or should be good, and he recommends it for educating children. The law is a benefactor (εὐεργέτης).³⁰ Clement speaks primarily of δίδωθαι, which is based on the law and is the task of the educator. Just as no one can protest the law,³² it is beyond doubt that punishment serves a legitimate aim. How then does Clement draw, completely un-Platonically, the connection between this line of thought and the idea of God's *pronoia*? First, Clement understands the lawgiver and the ruler of a state as a metaphor for God, and the divine ordering of the cosmos is part of the concept of *pronoia*. Second, *pronoia* comes into play through the Wisdom literature of the *Septuagint*.³³ Clement quotes Plato and, for example, Sir 18:13–14³⁴ side by side and thereby inserts the metaphor of the shepherd, which is the basic metaphor of the caring God and of *pronoia* in the sense of care.

Clement fundamentally identifies *pronoia* and *paideia* and exhorts us to use our time in this world³⁵ to find a virtuous life in the sense of *paideia*.³⁶ All the small and large adversities of life appear to be the means of *paideia* on the path to the progressive correction and purification of the soul. These punishments are necessarily restrained, but are there not examples of punishment without meaning, ones that exceed moderation and senselessly destroy people rather than edifying them? Clement comments on the story of the Flood in this context. The Flood, Clement responds, destroyed only crude material, not the fine material of souls. With regard to these souls, Clement attempts to adhere to the concept that God's punishment is tied

²⁸ *Strom.* I 171, 4.

²⁹ Vgl. *Paed.* I 70, 3.

³⁰ *Strom.* I 173, 3.

³¹ *Strom.* VI 99, 2.

³² Cf. the law of Zaleucus as handed down by Polybius, according to which if in a dispute one party dares to question the meaning of a law, the two disputants should speak before the "thousand" on the subject of the lawgiver's meaning, each with a halter round his neck, and whichever of them appears to interpret the law worse, should be hanged in the presence of the thousand. See Polybius, *Hist.* XII 16, 10–11 (ed. Theodor Bittner-Wobst, 5 vols., Stuttgart: Teubner, 1962).

³³ *Strom.* I 172, 3, quoting Prov 22:3–4.

³⁴ *Paed.* I 81, 3.

³⁵ *Strom.* IV 132, 1.

³⁶ But see also the idea of a sermon in Hades: *Strom.* VI 44, 5.

up with the education of human beings.³⁷ That means that Clement can speak of a *paideia* that goes beyond death.³⁸ The reference to the Flood remains an exception. The examples of experiences that Clement interprets as *paideia*, and hence ultimately attributes to divine *pronoia*, belong to life in this world, such as sickness or poverty. The path of human beings appears to be paved with punishments that are meant to lead those affected back to virtue. It is important to recognize that adversity, when Clement interprets them as punishments, presume a condition of sin.

Paideia follows two methods: punishment and education. Punishments are consequences of transgressions or sin.³⁹ Only that which is chosen by free will—that is to say, wrong choices—can be punished. Clement repeatedly emphasizes that people have choice and hence are responsible for their actions. Punishments function through deterrence, so that a certain choice is avoided out of fear (*φόβος*) of punishment.⁴⁰ Allowing one's actions to be determined by fear is not, however, Clement's ethical ideal. He exhorts the gnostic not to allow himself to be guided by necessity or compulsion.⁴¹ Only the freely made decision, based on reflection and information, leads to virtue. The choice is a kind of rational consent⁴² that precedes knowledge of what is being sought.⁴³ Clement speaks of a movement in which one has to know first what one wants to do.⁴⁴ The capacity for judgement has to be developed through practice, effort, and learning. The gnostic's way of life is a conscious choice and closely connected with his knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*).⁴⁵ The good life alone—that found among simple people, that is, people who have not reflected on their way of life and yet can also do good by chance—does not, in Clement's view, deserve reward and is not sufficient for a virtuous life.⁴⁶ Doing good in its proper sense requires a choice to

³⁷ *Strom.* VI 52, 1.

³⁸ Cf. the descent into Hades in *Strom.* VI 46, 3; VI 48, 4.

³⁹ Clemens elaborates that these are sins and lapses after baptism, which have to be purified by chastisement. Cf. *Strom.* IV 154, 3.

⁴⁰ *Strom.* VI 98, 3 (481, 19–20). Cf. Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria: A Project of Christian Perfection* (London/New York: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2008), 68–84. He draws attention to the fact that *φόβος* in the two senses, the first one originating “in the admiration of the goodness and rationality of the law” and the second facilitating “the avoidance of sin or errors” can be seen in the broader context of the Jewish Hellenistic Wisdom literature, in particular *Sirach*.

⁴¹ *Strom.* IV 36, 2.

⁴² *Strom.* V 3, 2.

⁴³ *Strom.* VI 69, 1–2.

⁴⁴ *Strom.* VI 69, 2 (GCS 17²: 466, 18).

⁴⁵ *Strom.* IV 22, 4.

⁴⁶ *Strom.* I 38, 1.

be made and is well-founded, explicable doing. Doing good is thus possible in three ways: first, it occurs by chance; second, it is intentional and chosen to achieve something (avoiding a punishment or obtaining a reward); or third, it is chosen for its own sake. The goal is the last of these: choosing the good for the sake of the good.⁴⁷ Although doing good is rewarded, the point, Clement emphasizes, is the good, that is, striving for knowledge for its own sake. Clement speaks of levels. The third level—doing the good for its own sake—describes an attitude that is immutable and remains in the good and is hence a state Clement describes as perfect: ἡ τελείωσις ἐν ἀμεταβόλῃ ἔξει εὐπορίας καθ' ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ θεοῦ διαμένει.⁴⁸ On this level, *paideia* functions primarily as instruction. It is necessary to teach because action always confronts us with a choice or alternative and a choice can be made only after reflection.

Let us assume the gnostic has reached the state in which he no longer does anything other than the good. Does the perfect person on this level still need *paideia* through punishment? Fear disappears with sin, so we can assume that punishments come to nothing. The question becomes even more critical. The adversities of life, such as poverty and sickness, affect the perfect person or the gnostic in the same way as they do all other people, but does he still perceive them as punishments or reprimands? The perfect person makes himself independent and free of the adverse conditions of life. He has achieved an immutable, dispassionate state,⁴⁹ as Clement shows using the example of Job.⁵⁰ He strives tirelessly that holding onto knowledge becomes a fixed attitude.⁵¹ Like all people, the gnostic can be afflicted by sickness or whatever bad circumstances, but they do not upset him; he remains, according to Clement's idea, fixed and unchanged (ἄτρεπτος).⁵² The blows of fate (τὰ λεγόμενα τυχηρὰ δεινὰ) cease to be such, because they are stripped of their fear.⁵³ The gnostic successfully resists everything fearful, shame, and the triad of sickness, poverty, and death, because he stands above the passions.⁵⁴ But does the dispassionate gnostic,

⁴⁷ *Strom.* VI 98, 3; VI 99, 1.

⁴⁸ *Strom.* VI 60, 3 (GCS 17²: 462, 14f.).

⁴⁹ Cf. Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952), 524–540; André Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates' de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 366–379.

⁵⁰ *Strom.* IV 19, 2.

⁵¹ *Strom.* VI 78, 3–4.

⁵² *Strom.* VII 61, 5.

⁵³ *Strom.* VII 65, 5 (GCS 217: 47, 3f.).

⁵⁴ *Strom.* VII 65, 1.

as Clement imagines him, manage to prevail in difficult situations, since Clement deprives him of all passions, include braveness and courage?⁵⁵ There seem to have been dissenting views here, against which Clement defended himself: Clement's gnostic knows no joy because he knows no sorrow. He needs no courage because there is no danger to him. He needs no self-control because he does not need to struggle with passions.⁵⁶ *Paideia* lies in being led to the *episteme*. Acquiring the *episteme* is the gnostic's lifelong task, but he is indifferent to everything that could be interpreted as education, punishment, or chastisement. What others avoid and fear as punishment no longer affects the perfect. The blows of fate do not strike the perfect person, because of his apathy. Hence if the gnostic is stricken by misery, it cannot be interpreted as God's punishment. Clement summarizes this in the fourth book of the *Stromateis*:

The gnostic's destiny will not lie in Tyche's hands. It depends on him whether he is happy, blessed, and a kingly friend of God. And if he suffers dishonour, banishment, the confiscation of his wealth, and ultimately death, he will not be robbed of freedom and above all of his love for God which "bears and endures all things." For love is convinced that divine *pronoia* manages all things well ...⁵⁷

The paragraph begins with Tyche and ends with the divine *pronoia*. *Pronoia* is contrasted with Tyche. That is to say that in contrast to chance, things are attributed an inherent intention for which the expression *pronoia* stands. *Pronoia* has no determining role in this; rather, Clement insists that human beings have the choice and the responsibility; that their life and their fortune is essentially 'up to them.' They have the choice to adopt an attitude in which they have learned to understand their own misfortune as part of God's good administration of the world. The misfortune that afflicts the perfect person as well is not attributed to the *pronoia* that educates by means of punishments but is rather interpreted by another concept of *pronoia*: *pronoia* as God's good administration of the world. Clement thus turns to another concept of *pronoia* to explain the misfortune of the perfect person.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *Strom.* VI 72, 3.

⁵⁶ *Strom.* VI 71, 3–5.

⁵⁷ *Strom.* IV 52, 2–4: οὐκ οὐκ ἐπὶ τῇ τύχῃ τὸ τέλος ἔξει ποτὲ ὁ γνωστικὸς κείμενος, ἀλλ' ἐπ' αὐτῷ τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἂν εἴη καὶ τὸ μακαρίῳ εἶναι βασιλικῷ τε φίλῳ τοῦ θεοῦ· κὰν ἀτιμία τις περιβάλλῃ τοῦτον φυγὴ τε καὶ δημεύσει καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θανάτῳ, οὐκ ἀποσπασθήσεται ποτε τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ κυριωτάτης πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀγάπης, ἥ πάντα στέγει καὶ πάντα ὑπομένει. καλῶς πάντα τὴν θείαν διοικεῖν πρόνοιαν πέπεισται ἡ ἀγάπη.

⁵⁸ Cf. esp. *Strom.* VII 61, 5.

It is very interesting that Clement's examples of misfortune are not poverty, sickness, and death but rather the subjection to infamia, that is, the loss of civil rights, followed in a second step by the confiscation of wealth, and in the third step by sentencing to death. What can affect the gnostic? In this section Clement is clearly thinking of a persecution of Christians. Since he was thinking of an example of misfortune, he cannot refer to the gnostic as a martyr, so he refers to the legal process instead. This detail corresponds to the discussion with Basilides, which is a major theme of the fourth book.

Clement, as Basilides, interprets *pronoia* fundamentally as *paideia*. However, it was precisely this identification with *paideia* that was disputed in connection with martyrdom. If Clement had followed the line of argumentation and included the perfect gnostic or martyr among the chastisements exercised by God's *pronoia*, he could conceivably have come very close to Basilides' concept.

The point of origin was not controversial between Basilides and Clement; there was no dispute that the concept of *pronoia* is connected with the judicial action of God distributing chastisements to whoever deserves them. Both were convinced that punishments can only be understood as consequence of sin or transgressions. As the example of martyrs makes clear, the explanations of Basilides and Clemens differ; at least Clemens emphasizes such differences in their responses to critics in the context of martyrdom.

Can we speak of God's *pronoia* at all in the face of martyrdom? "If God cares for you, why are you being persecuted and killed?"⁵⁹ Such questions were raised by outsiders, but they were also posed by Christians. If one subordinates martyrdom to sickness and accident, does one have to interpret martyrdom as a means of *paideia*—that is, as a punishment—and ascribe it to *pronoia*? Basilides draws exactly that conclusion. He wants to avoid any critique of the concept of *pronoia*. "I would rather say anything else other than that *pronoia* is bad."⁶⁰ According to Basilides, sin precedes suffering, and only when sin precedes suffering can we speak of a justice of *pronoia*. And according to Basilides, this holds true even for martyrs. Even the martyr does not suffer unfoundedly. Even in the case of the respected martyr, the just person par excellence suffers for his sins, even if they are hidden.

The example Basilides uses is not that of the tyrant who deserves his miserable death, but rather the exemplary figure of the martyr. Everyone who undergoes martyrdom, has—according to Basilides—committed hidden

⁵⁹ *Strom.* IV 78, 1.

⁶⁰ *Strom.* IV 82, 2.

sins, but he receives good treatment anyway, because he is judged as a Christian and not as a delinquent.⁶¹ The perfect person suffers like a child who did not sin but bears the potential to sin in itself. Basilides conceives of martyrdom as the result of a misdeed and explains it on three levels. First, on the level of the actual misdeed. Second, on the level of a possibly not yet realized tendency to offend or sin; and finally on the anthropological level—on which no human being is without sin. The *pronoia* cannot be accused of being unjust.⁶² Basilides' text is another example of the close conjunction of the concepts of *pronoia* and justice.

Clement formulates his high regard for the martyrs in book four.⁶³ He subsumes the explanations of Basilides under the blasphemies against the martyrs like: Why do the martyrs suffer this punishment? Are they not really that perfect or is God or his *pronoia* powerless? When Clement speaks of martyrs—unlike Basilides—it is not a matter of bad people but of consummate people, exceptional figures of Christian piety, religious virtuosos. They are not guilty of any sin, but this need not make God responsible for their persecution. God does not hand over the martyrs to persecution—according to Clement. However, God allows persecution; he does not prohibit it. This argument is part of the concept of God's universal *pronoia*. According to this concept God integrates good and bad into the universal context and distributes the appropriate and just places so that even suffering finds its way into the well-ordered universe.⁶⁴ The idea of a divine-ordered cosmos that includes both good and bad conditions of life, with both contributing to the whole, was widespread. Clement counters Basilides with this model. It allows Clement to insist that God is not guilty of persecutions, since all he does is not prevent them.⁶⁵ This is a juridical argument, and it is interesting that Clement also offers the counterargument⁶⁶ that the person who does not prevent a theft or a fire is guilty.

⁶¹ *Strom.* IV 81, 2.

⁶² *Strom.* IV 82, 1–2.

⁶³ Cf. *Strom.* VII 66, 4.

⁶⁴ *Strom.* IV 29, 1; cf. VI 159, 3 and I 86, 3.

⁶⁵ *Strom.* IV 86, 3. Cf. the continuation of the argument in Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 41 (116, 3–9).

⁶⁶ *Strom.* I 82, 1–2: "I know that many constantly put pressure on us, saying that not to prevent something is to be responsible for it. They claim for example that responsibility for a theft is attaches to whoever failed to keep watch or prevent it, just as in the case of a fire to whoever did not extinguish the terrible flame in the beginning and in the case of a shipwreck the steersman who did not taken in the sail. Moreover those who carry responsibility in this sense are punishable by law. Responsibility for an outcome is ascribed to anyone that had the power to prevent it."

It becomes clear in the example of the martyrs that it does not suffice to interpret the act-and-consequence connection anew and to add to it the concept of *pronoia*. For Clement, martyrdom is not a punishment. That would relieve the persecutors from their responsibility and deny the martyrs their award in heaven. According to Clement, the persecuted and the persecutors are free and responsible. The *pronoia* does not coerce; moreover, *pronoia* stands for the conviction of the martyrs that there is a divine order of the universe. The gnostic is free to choose and God is free to dispense. Holiness on the part of the gnostic and *pronoia* on the part of God are corresponding movements.⁶⁷

However, if the martyrs are not punished, can martyrdoms be explained within the concept of *paideia*? Are martyrdoms examples of *paideia* as models that serve others or the community? Here too Clement expresses reservations. The horrors of martyrdom are evident from his text. For Clement it seems completely inconceivable that a gnostic could be taught by means of these spectacles. "Because he does not fall into sins, he is not educated by examples of misfortunes that strike others."⁶⁸

Clement does not spell out what follows after the gnostic has made his or her life choice, as, for example, Eusebius of Caesarea later does. In the end, however, we are drawn back to *paideia*, education, punishment, and improvement. At the end of book seven, Clement takes a step back and again speaks of the transgressions that most Christians commit even after baptism and of divine *κολάσεις*, writing:

But as children are punished by their teacher, or their father, so are we by *pronoia*. God, however, does not take revenge (for vengeance is giving back of evil in turn), as he punishes to benefit the punished, collectively and individually.⁶⁹

The gnostic ideal remains a goal, but until then paternal education applies. Clement cannot imagine the gnostic without involvement in the process of education, even if only in the form that the gnostic, imitating the heavenly teacher,⁷⁰ becomes a teacher him- or herself and offers instruction in the

⁶⁷ *Strom.* VII 42, 1–4.

⁶⁸ *Strom.* VII 74, 6.

⁶⁹ *Strom.* VII 102, 5.

⁷⁰ On the logos as teacher and the link between the logos and the gnostic in their pedagogical activities, see Judith L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria," *J ECS* 9 (2001) 3–25; Bogdan G. Bucur, "The Place of the *Hypotyposeis* in the Clementine Corpus: An Apology for 'the Other Clement of Alexandria,'" *J ECS* 17 (2009) 313–335.

sense of *paideia*. But what does *paideia* achieve? Do those whom the gnostic instructs become gnostics, and does the gnostic eventually join the ranks of the angels?⁷¹ Or are there differences between human beings that are legitimized in the idea of a world ordered by God, which can by no means be conceived as a unified structure? Is it all a *paideia* that is limited by the existing possibilities?

Clement argues against the idea of a perfection granted by nature, which he attributes to Valentinus, Basilides, and their followers. Perfection is not innate to humankind.⁷² According to Clement, Adam was not brought to perfection by creation but rather given the ability to acquire virtue.⁷³ Becoming virtuous or perfect is a matter of free choice, training, and tenacity.⁷⁴ Everyone, according to Clement, was granted by nature the possibility of a virtuous life, but not all make the same progress but get stuck at different points.⁷⁵ Consequently, for Clement there are differences even among the perfect.⁷⁶ Is everyone free to reach the goal of the perfect life if he or she makes the effort? Clement speaks of differences in two respects: first

⁷¹ *Strom.* VII 57, 5. Bogdan G. Bucur, "The Other Clement of Alexandria: Cosmic Hierarchy and Interiorized Apocalypticism," *VChr* 60 (2006) 251–268, here 260, gives evidence that Clement knows of a "progressive transformation of one level into the next" that takes place at the end of a millennial cycle and affects all ranks of the hierarchy. Bucur refers to *Ecl.* 57, 5: "For those among humans who start being transformed into angels are instructed by the angels for a thousand years, in order to be restored to perfection. Then the instructors are translated into archangelic authority, while those who received instruction will in turn instruct those among humans who are transformed into angels; thereupon they are, at the specified period, reestablished into the proper angelic state of the body." (Trans. B.G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses*, *VChr* Suppl. 95; Leiden: Brill, 2009, 42). Cf. also *Ecl.* 56, 7, where the archangels, the prototists, arrive at peace and contemplation of God and no longer have to do the service of the *pronoia*. *Ecl.* 56–57 is an interpretation of Ps 18:6 ff. See also Michel Cambe, "Avenir solaire et angélique des justes: Le Psaume 19(18)," *CBP* 10 (2009) 101–146. The "rise to the nature of the angels" is one of the expressions Clement uses to speak about the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) of the gnostics, cf. Andrew C. Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (*VChr* Suppl. 97; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 175–216, esp. 201–210. The concept of a universal eschatological restoration must not be read into Clement's explanations of the universal *pronoia*. διοίκησις, the cognate of πρόνοια in this context, refers to bringing together opposites into a harmony, but it does not imply the idea of a dissolution of the opposites or the restoration of its elements. Cf. for example *Strom.* I 86, 1–3.

⁷² *Strom.* I 34, 1.

⁷³ *Strom.* VI 96, 1–3.

⁷⁴ On self-training and in this context on the function of the law as a "new tool for healing" of the law cf. Harry O. Maier, "Clement of Alexandria and the Care of the Self," *JAAR* 62 (1995) 719–740, esp. 720–728.

⁷⁵ *Strom.* VI 96, 3.

⁷⁶ *Strom.* IV 132, 2 (1 Cor 3:8–9).

in regard to nature and second in regard to choice. Here again, much like in the question of martyrs, his proximity to the Gnostics he was debating becomes evident, but so does the point where Clement distances himself. Given the premise that everyone has to find his or her own path to virtue, for Clement there are differences grounded in nature. Clement likes to explain these differences by interpreting biblical parables. The vintner recognizes whether a vine will bear fruit or not.⁷⁷ Everyone works together in the vineyard, but there are different tasks.⁷⁸ The natural inclination of people to take on different tasks makes it clear that there are differences in the natural propensity to virtue.⁷⁹ But if people are encouraged, even the less talented with naturally poor gifts can certainly do good, just as the neglectful often remain unsuccessful despite their talents. The task of the teacher is precisely to encourage the good in people,⁸⁰ but the natural abilities of the students can differ greatly. Nevertheless, great talents do not guarantee success. It requires will and the teacher, as is especially clear in the struggle to achieve a virtuous life. This refers to the second cause of the differences between people, namely, the will of each individual. Here too Clement is fond of using biblical parables to illustrate his point, such as the parable of the father's two sons, who for Clement stand for fundamentally different life choices (Matt 20:28–31),⁸¹ but also the expression of the many apartments in the father's house (John 14), which for Clement stand for different rewards but also for the diversity of Christian believers.⁸²

The gnostic's path to the perfect contemplation of God began with his natural endowment, his life choice and his level of efforts. It is particularly true of the gnostic that he or she is raised to a higher level of the knowledge of God.⁸³ The fact that this distinguishes him from others finds its expression in the fact that God's *pronoia* is granted to him in a special way.⁸⁴ This text leads back to the hierarchy inherent in the concept of *pronoia*, in which the stronger care for the weaker. The gnostic is like a hinge on which the *paideia* spreads out. The gnostic, either as a teacher to whom students entrust themselves or as a statesman, has a specific responsibility to which corresponds

⁷⁷ *Strom.* I 34, 2.

⁷⁸ *Strom.* I 7, 4.

⁷⁹ *Strom.* I 34, 3–4.

⁸⁰ *Strom.* I 169, 1.

⁸¹ *Strom.* IV 30, 2.

⁸² *Strom.* IV 36, 3; IV 37, 1.

⁸³ Cf. the summary in Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 174–187.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Strom.* VI 158, 1–2; VII 48, 1.

a specific divine support. What image results? Is Clement thinking of a long chain, along which God's *pronoia* will eventually reach even the weakest, passed along from link to link. Or does Clement conceive of a ranked hierarchy including the gnostic on the lowest level beneath the angels? Bogdan Bucur aptly formulated this alternative in another context as one between texts that "present a fix[ed] cosmic hierarchy," on the one hand, and, on the other hand, texts that "interpret this process of initiation as a continuous ascent on the cosmic ladder."⁸⁵ This alternative is interesting in particular in reference to the texts from the seventh book of the *Stromateis*.

3. EXPLAINING THE PARTICULAR *PRONOIA* AND THE STATUS OF THE GNOTIC

Clement again and again emphasizes his conviction that the gnostic is free to choose. He receives what he deserves, power and support; however, according to Clement, this is true not in a general sense but according to his life choice. This comes very close to the concept of 'conditional fate,' whereby our actions are our responsibility, but "once we have performed them the consequences are fated."⁸⁶ In book five,⁸⁷ Clement refers to the myth of the Platonic *Republic* and identifies the angels with the daemons that Lachesis, the daughter of necessity, sent to the souls who had chosen their lives to be the guardians of lives and the fulfillers of the choice.⁸⁸ In contrast to the Platonic myth, however, what the angels exercise is *pronoia*. Clement can bring the angels into play as they are the ones who have the task of distributing what people deserve. Clement explains this in various ways.

Clement can speak of angels placed above people and cities,⁸⁹ of angels that control the ascent to God,⁹⁰ of divine assistance that is extended to

⁸⁵ Bucur, "The Other Clement of Alexandria," 251. According to Bucur, the imagistic details of the cosmic hierarchies of angels "are emptied of the literal meaning they had in the apocalyptic cosmology" and became "images of interior transformation" (ibid. 262).

⁸⁶ Robert W. Sharples, "Nemesius of Emesa and Some Theories of Divine Providence," *VChr* 37 (1983) 141–156, here 147, see Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 37.

⁸⁷ *Strom.* V 91, 3.

⁸⁸ Plato, *Resp.* X 620.

⁸⁹ *Strom.* VI 157, 5, cf. VII 6, 4. See Monika Recinová in the present volume and Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelsglaubens im vorrabbinischen Judentum* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 255–266.

⁹⁰ *Strom.* IV 116, 2.

human beings, whereby the angels ‘help strengthen’ human beings.⁹¹ Clement clearly shares the belief in angels as mediators⁹² and refers to a celestial hierarchy including higher and lower angels.⁹³ It has already been pointed out that Clement made use of Jewish and Hellenic traditions in this context.⁹⁴ If one includes the more general notion of *διοίκεσις*, one finds Clement mentioning the stars and the fixed stars, which are said to be powers within the framework of the divine administration (*διοίκεσις*) of the world,⁹⁵ an idea from which Clement immediately distances himself:

But most people, together with the philosophers, ascribe growth and change primarily to the stars and rob, as far as it is up to them, the father of the universe of his inexhaustible power.⁹⁶

Clement distances himself from the idea that the coming-to-be and passing-away are attributed to the stars, which occurs in Nemesius’ and Pseudo-Plutarch’s description of the ‘second *pronoia*.’ However, Clement seems to be aware of subordinate powers that have been assigned to carry out the world order, and he approves of this as long as it is ensured that they subordinate themselves to the Logos and are understood as part of the hidden workings of the Logos:

The elements and the stars—that is, the ordering powers of the world—are assigned to accomplish what is needful for the administration. They in turn follow and are directed by the powers that are set above them as the word of the Lord leads them, for it is in the nature of the divine power to work in a hidden way.⁹⁷

The question of references to the Middle Platonist concept of a ‘threefold *pronoia*’ arises and will be addressed later. The three main sources of the ‘threefold *pronoia*’ are interested in defining the role of fate in relationship

⁹¹ *Strom.* VI 161, 2, cf. V 91, 3. See the interpretation in Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 61–71.

⁹² Cf. *Strom.* VI 161, 2.

⁹³ Cf. in particular Bucur, “The Other Clement of Alexandria.”

⁹⁴ Cf. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 28–83, and Monika Recinová in the present volume. On the significance of Jewish esoteric traditions taken up by Clement, see Guy G. Stroumsa, “Clement, Origen, and Jewish Esoteric Traditions”, in *Schleier und Schwelle*, vol. 2: *Geheimnis und Offenbarung* (ed. Theo Sundermeier; vol. 5 of *Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation*, eds. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1998), 123–142.

⁹⁵ *Strom.* VI 143, 1; VI 148, 1, cf. Ps.-Plutarch, *De fato* 568e; Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 43 (126, 4–10).

⁹⁶ *Strom.* VI 148, 1.

⁹⁷ *Strom.* VI 148, 2.

to *pronoia*. The *Excerpta ex Theodoto* include a text that shows that Clement was at least aware of the problem of determining this relationship:

Fate is a union of many opposing forces and they are invisible and unseen, guiding the course of the stars and governing through them ... But both the stars and the powers are of different kinds: some are beneficent, some maleficent, some right, some left, and that which is born shares in both qualities. And each of them comes into being at its own time, the dominant sign fulfilling the course of nature, aptly at the beginning, partly at the end.

From this situation and battle of the powers the Lord rescues us and supplies peace from the array of powers and angels, in which some are arrayed for us and others against us. For some are like soldiers fighting on our side as servants of God but others are like brigands ... For their providential power is not perfect like the Good shepherd's but each one is like a mercenary who sees the wolf coming and flees and is not zealous to give up his life for his own sheep ... Therefore a strange and new star arose ... as the Lord himself, men's guide, who came down to earth to transfer from fate to his providence those who believed in Christ.⁹⁸

Fate governs through the stars, which are together with the powers subordinate to fate. However, both are involved in a kind of battle. The text shifts to powers and angels and speaks of their providential power. However, their *pronoia* is seriously unreliable, so that instead of fate and stars a new star arose, Christ or Kyrios, who replaced fate and the providence of the powers through his *pronoia*. The text is not one of the passages in the *Excerpta* that are attributed to Clement himself,⁹⁹ but we see in this text, as in Clement, an attempt to relativize the powers and the angels and deprive them of their power,¹⁰⁰ and an absorption of the *pronoia* into the person of the Logos.¹⁰¹ In the fourth book of the *Stromateis*, the mentioning of the attri-

⁹⁸ Exc. 69, 1–74, 2; trans. Robert Pierce Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria* (Studies and Documents 1; London: Christophers), 1934, 85–87.

⁹⁹ See the introduction by François Sagnard in Clément d'Alexandrie, *Extraits de Théodote* (trans. F. Sagnard, SC 23; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1970).

¹⁰⁰ *Strom.* VII 64, 6.

¹⁰¹ A clear picture of this absorption is given in *Strom.* IV 156, 1–2: ὁ μὲν οὖν θεὸς ἀναπόδεικτος ὦν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστημονικός, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς σοφία τέ ἐστι καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀλήθεια καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τούτῳ συγγενή, καὶ διὰ καὶ ἀπόδειξιν ἔχει καὶ διέξοδον. πᾶσαι δὲ αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ πνεύματος συλλήβδην μὲν ἐν τι πράγματι γινόμεναι συντελοῦσιν εἰς τὸ αὐτό, τὸν υἱόν, ἀπαρέμφατος δὲ ἐστὶ τῆς περὶ ἐκάστης αὐτοῦ τῶν δυνάμεων ἐννοίας. καὶ διὰ οὐ γίνεται ἀτεχνῶς ἐν ὧς ἐν, οὐδὲ πολλὰ ὧς μέρη ὁ υἱός, ἀλλ' ὧς πάντα ἐν. ἐνθεν καὶ πάντα· κύκλος γὰρ ὁ αὐτὸς πασῶν τῶν δυνάμεων εἰς ἐν εἰλουμένων καὶ ἐνουμένων. In connection with *Strom.* IV 156, 1–2, John Whittaker speaks of “much clearer evidence of the influence of the *Parmenides*, interpreted on Neoplatonic lines” (“Ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας,” *VChr* 23, 1969, 91–104, here 98). He interprets the Father as ὁ μὲν οὖν θεὸς ἀναπόδεικτος ὦν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστημονικός in relation to the Son. His observations are also

bution of angels to the nations, the cities, or individual human beings leads Clement to talk about the shepherd who takes care of every single sheep. We find very similarly angels and the shepherd next to each other, both—as the metaphor indicates—exercising *pronoia*. However, taking into consideration the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, the qualitative difference between the *pronoia* of the Shepherd and the divine servants supporting human beings can also be seen in *Strom.* VI 157, 4–5:

Also the thoughts of virtuous men come into being through divine inspiration in that the soul is prepared in some way and God's will is passed on to human souls whereby the divine beings who are assigned to the particular service contribute to such ministries. For the governance over nations and cities is distributed among the angels. Perhaps some of those angels that are dealing with particulars are assigned to specific individuals.

There are a number of explicit statements that God's *pronoia* extends to individual human beings,¹⁰² and the explanations of the angels presuppose those statements. The gnostic is taught in dialectics not to mingle up the general and generic with species and individual and their properties (*Strom.* VI 82, 2), and this is also vital for understanding the concept of *pronoia*. However, in book six one would expect more explicit references to the individual *pronoia* to appear in the context of Clement's explanation of angels.¹⁰³ In book seven, explicit references to *pronoia* that effect individuals are more frequent and spelled out in more detail.

In book seven Clement refutes at length a counterargument against the particular *pronoia* in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*.¹⁰⁴ From the hypothesis (to be falsified) that God does not take thought concerning all human beings, because he either cannot or does not wish to, Clement draws the opposite conclusion that God cares for particulars. This argument can

of importance for the relationship between the δυνάμεις and the Son. The powers can be identified with the angels, and probably with the protoctists. This relationship, according to this paragraph, goes beyond a relationship between part and whole. The powers belong to the Son; however the Son cannot be understood as the sum of the powers or angels. The Son is one in the sense of ὡς πάντα ἓν. He does not consist of parts that Clement explains by reference to the circle. He uses the circle because it has no beginning or end or anything in the middle, and therefore does not evoke the idea of parts, as Plato explains in *Parm.* 137d. In Clement the circle stands for a whole that does not consist of parts but absorbs and comprehends them.

¹⁰² See especially *Strom.* VII 6, 1; VII 9, 1; VII 21, 7; cf. *Strom.* V 73, 3; VI 148, 6; VI 158, 1; VI 161, 6; VII 102, 5.

¹⁰³ One of those is the interesting passage *Ecl.* 56, 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Strom.* VII 6, 5–7, 7.

be traced back to Plato, *Leg.* X 903,¹⁰⁵ and it is also found in Alexander of Aphrodisias.¹⁰⁶ In Clement, after considering God's possible ignorance about human affairs or a certain amount of negligence to which the details of human life fall prey, the line of thought ultimately turns to the theological argument that only the *pronoia* that reaches the individuals is compatible with the doctrine of incarnation. That is, the distinction between the general and the individual *pronoia* is primarily integrated into Clement's concept of the Logos and the Son of God. Starting at *Strom.* VII 5 Clement speaks of the nature of the Son of God being closest to the only Almighty One. This closeness and superior nature of the Son of God finds its expression in a host of royal titles. The Son is characterized as someone without rest and unwearying in disposing and governing everything according to the will of the Father. The Son is entirely *nous*, entirely the light that comes from the Father; he is the eye, and therefore he sees and hears everything. The army of angels and gods is subordinate to him; but nevertheless, the Son alone governs everything. Therefore, all human beings belong to him as well, be they gnostics or not, either believers or simply servants. Clement summarizes as follows: *pronoia* cares first for the individual, second for people as a community, and third can be found everywhere.¹⁰⁷

These three forms or aspects of *pronoia* come together in the person of the Logos. This observation touches the interpretations of Clement's Logos Christology. Salvatore Lilla made the distinction between understanding the Logos first as "the mind of God which contains his thoughts" (with reference to *Strom.* VI 155, 2 and V 73, 3),¹⁰⁸ or as "the totality of ideas or divine powers" (*Strom.* IV 156, 1–2), second as "the principle (ἀρχή) of everything which has been created" (*Strom.* V 38, 7), and third identified "with the divine wisdom, the first of the beings created by God and his advisor."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ On this connection and the significance of *Leg.* X for the development of Clement's argumentation in *Strom.* VII, see Friedrich Solmsen, "Providence and the Souls: A Platonic Chapter in Clement of Alexandria," *MH* 26 (1969) 229–251.

¹⁰⁶ *De providentia* 24, 16–23 (ed. H.J. Ruland, *Die arabischen Fassungen von zwei Schriften des Alexanders von Aphrodisias, Über die Vorsehung und Über das Liberum arbitrium*, Ph.D. diss., Saarbrücken, 1976). Also in Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 43 (130, 9–10), see Robert W. Sharples, "Threefold Providence: The History and Background of a Doctrine," in Robert W. Sharples and Anne Sheppard (eds.), *Ancient Approaches To Plato's Timaeus* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2003), 107–127, esp. 116–120.

¹⁰⁷ *Strom.* VII 6, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 201.

¹⁰⁹ Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 207 f.

Mark Edwards clearly shows that the first and second distinctions made by Clement should not lead us to assume that Clement's Christological concept builds up upon a "two-stage theory" according to which "the Logos was embedded from all eternity in the Father, and became a second *hypostasis* when the Father brought it forth, 'before the ages,' as his instrument of creation."¹¹⁰ Part of this second stage is not only the Logos as creator but also as the continuation of creation that is the continuous divine care, *pronoia*, which Clement identifies with the Logos. Clement knows of a divine hierarchical order, he speaks of stages or levels in connection with the life of the gnostic. However, as we will see, Clement probably does not depict a threefold order of divine beings in his concept of *pronoia* either. Clement knows the particular *pronoia* and does not separate it from the universal *pronoia*. This raises the question of how *pronoia* reaches the individual.

One answer has been offered by several Platonists who speak of a first, a second, and a third *pronoia* and distinguish between three levels of *pronoia*, assigning them to the first god, the second god, and the *daimones*, respectively. This model of a threefold *pronoia* is most clearly expressed in a short text by Pseudo-Plutarch:

The highest and first *pronoia* is the thought and the will of the first God, being the benefactrix to all; and in accordance with this all divine things are in the beginning entirely ordered in the best and most beautiful way. The second *pronoia* is that of the secondary gods, who move in heaven, and in accordance with it all mortal things come into being in an orderly manner, as well as whatever serves the continuance and preservation of the various genera. The *pronoia* and forethought of the daemons that are placed on earth, who are guardians and protectors over human actions, can be reasonably called the third *pronoia*.¹¹¹

There are a few texts that are grouped together on the basis of similarities in their treatment of God's *pronoia*. The first example is Apuleius, which means that Clement could have been familiar with the concept. Apuleius distinguishes a first and a second *pronoia*,¹¹² and in addition Pseudo-Plutarch

¹¹⁰ Mark J. Edwards, "Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos," *VChr* 54 (2000) 159–177, here 159. According to Edwards, the "two-stage theory" is mainly supported by a few texts not passed down in the *Stromateis*. Edwards (168, 171) quotes a fragment from the *Hypotyposes* (GCS 17²: 202, 7–22) and from the *Adumbrationes* (GCS 17²: 209, 24–210, 8).

¹¹¹ Ps.-Plutarch, *De fato* 9, 572f–573a (trans. Phillip H. De Lacy and Benedict Einarson, LCL 405, 343).

¹¹² Apuleius, *De Platone et eius dogmate* 12, 205f. (Apulée, *Opusculs philosophiques*, ed. by J. Beaujeu, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973).

and Nemeseius¹¹³ speak of a third *pronoia*. Plato, *Timaeus* 39–41, is in the background. The three texts all recognize distinct levels of *pronoia*, whereby the highest God exercises the most universal *pronoia* while the third level *pronoia* reaches the circumstances of human individuals' daily lives. Finally, the threefold *pronoia* is found in all three texts in connection with the question of the relationship between *pronoia* and *heimarmene*.¹¹⁴ The texts show significant variations, however. Nemeseius states: "The first providence is that of the first god, and his providence is primarily for the forms, next for the world universally, for example the heavens and the stars, and for all things universal, i.e. genera, substance, quantity, quality and other such things, and the species subordinate to them."¹¹⁵ Pseudo-Plutarch speaks of "preservation of the various genera" by the second *pronoia*. The variations become even more significant when such later texts as Calcidius or Hierocles are included.¹¹⁶ The texts presume a discussion that opposes universal *pronoia*—the *pronoia* that is not primarily directed at individuals—with *pronoia* that relates to individuals as such.¹¹⁷ The concept of a threefold *pronoia* bridges this opposition and at the same time frees the highest God from observing the details on earth. The concept takes up parts and concerns that explain why *pronoia* should only be thought of as a universal *pronoia* which stands for the cosmos as a well-ordered whole or as a *pronoia* that guarantees the preservation of genera and species. It also respects the conviction that the individual is cared for, as are the

¹¹³ Robert Sharples concludes by discovering references to Alexander of Aphrodisias in Nemeseius' treatment of the theme of *pronoia*: "[T]his whole section of Nemeseius' treatise is best understood in the context of the debates about divine providence that flourished in the first two centuries A.D. in particular"; see Robert W. Sharples, "Nemeseius of Emesa and Some Theories of Divine Providence," *VChr* 37 (1983) 141–156, here 152.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Nemeseius, *De natura hominis* 43 (126, 15–18): "It is worthy of praise that he (Plato) refers all to God and says that all providence depends upon his wish; but not also his saying that the second providence is those that circle round the earth; for this is not providence, but fate and necessity." (Trans. R.W. Sharples and P.J. van der Eijk, Nemeseius, *On the Nature of Man*).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Nemeseius, *De natura hominis* 43 (125, 23–126, 4, trans. R.W. Sharples and P.J. van der Eijk, Nemeseius, *On the Nature of Man*): πρώτην μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τὴν τοῦ πρώτου θεοῦ, προνοεῖν δὲ τοῦτον προηγουμένως μὲν τῶν ιδεῶν, ἔπειτα δὲ ξύμπαντος τοῦ καθ' ὅλου κόσμου, οἶον οὐρανῶν καὶ ἀστέρων καὶ πάντων τῶν καθ' ὅλου, τουτέστι τῶν γενῶν, οὐσίας τε καὶ ποσότητος καὶ ποιότητος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τοιούτων καὶ τῶν τούτοις ὑποτεταγμένων ειδῶν.

¹¹⁶ Bergjan, *Der fürsorgende Gott*, 312–315.

¹¹⁷ The opposition is expressed especially clearly by Nemeseius, *De natura hominis* 43 (125, 19–21). Cf. the formulation by Justin, *Dial.* 1, 3–4 (ed. Miroslav Marcovich, PTS 47; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1997, 70, 19–29). On the different ways to understand this opposition, see Sharples, "Threefold Providence."

Father's children, but integrates this conviction by delegating this kind of *pronoia* to the *daimones* or guardians.

The threefold *pronoia* can therefore be viewed from different perspectives. It can explain why the universal *pronoia* does not exclude a concern for individuals. The universal *pronoia* can be regarded as requiring concern for particulars, just as a physician cannot treat a person without treating particular organs. In other words, the universal and the individual *pronoia* cannot be separated according to this point of view. The second option is that there is a universal *pronoia* without special concern for individuals just as the preservation of a species does not require the preservation of all individuals but only of some. In this case, *pronoia* is not especially concerned with particulars, although this should not be understood as entirely disregarding the individuals. From the perspective of the individual this means that the individual does not see himself as being the primary target of the universal *pronoia* but does not feel neglected either, since the cosmos as the well-ordered whole also affects the individuals.¹¹⁸ Clement certainly makes use of this train of thought. On the other hand, the threefold *pronoia* can be seen as an argument in favour of the individual *pronoia* by laying out the path *pronoia* has to pursue in order to reach the particulars. Nemesius adopts this point of view.

It would seem that the threefold *pronoia* could be a concept to explain the role angels play in Clement's thought. However, there is an alternative line of thinking clearly evident in Clement. The distance from the model of the threefold *pronoia* is most evident in the metaphor of the sun bringing light to the remotest places:

In the way that the sun not only lights the sky and the entire world and shines upon land and sea, but also sends light through windows and small openings into the innermost rooms, so the Word pours itself everywhere and observes the smallest actions of life.¹¹⁹

The light that shines in every last corner of the house is nothing but the light illuminating everything in the world. This is a metaphor for the divine Logos in which intermediate authorities and mediators have no place. The purpose of the metaphor is to trace back to the first cause. According to

¹¹⁸ On this distinction between neglect and delegation, see Sharples, "Threefold Providence," 121–123.

¹¹⁹ *Strom.* VII 21, 7: ὅνπερ γὰρ τρόπον ὁ ἥλιος οὐ μόνον τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον φωτίζει γῆν τε καὶ θάλασσαν ἐπιλάμπων, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ θυρίδων καὶ μικρᾶς ὁπῆς πρὸς τοὺς μυχαιτάτους οἴκους ἀποστέλλει τὴν αὐγὴν, οὕτως ὁ λόγος πάντῃ κεχυμένος καὶ τὰ σμικρότατα τῶν τοῦ βίου πράξεων ἐπιβλέπει.

Clement, every form of *pronoia* has to be traced back to the Logos.¹²⁰ Like the light in the rooms, it is nothing but the Logos, present even in everyday life. But the question is, how?

The following sentence from book seven deserves special attention:

Through the will of the almighty Father the Son is the source of all good things, the primary power of motion, which is not perceivable by the senses.¹²¹

This has to be read together with *Strom.* VI 148, 6:

So the universal *pronoia* passes on its active power (*energeia*) through the movement of the closest beings down to particular things.¹²²

Clement describes a movement that starts in the Son and ends in human individuals, including on its way the angels, the gnostics, the less advanced believers, and finally, the ones who do not yet believe. *Pronoia* is intrinsically conceived of as a hierarchically organized movement downward, in which the stronger one is meant to care for the weaker one, who in turn cares for the proximate weaker one, and so on. The continuous relation of Father and Son is indicated by Clement's use of the phrase κατὰ τὸ προσεχές (for example, in ὅς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, φησὶν ὁ ἀπόστολος, μάλιστα δὲ πιστῶν, κατὰ δὲ τὸ προσεχές ὑπὸ τῶν προσεχῶν ἐκάστοις κατὰ τὴν τοῦ προσεχοῦς τῷ πρώτῳ αἰτίῳ κυρίου ἐπίταξιν τε καὶ πρόσταξιν).¹²³

(Pseudo-)Aristotle's text *De mundo*¹²⁴ shows that this explanation could be understood as an alternative to the threefold *pronoia*. *De mundo* uses the

¹²⁰ *Strom.* VII 5, 4–6.

¹²¹ *Strom.* VII 8, 5: οὕτως ἀπάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν θελήματι τοῦ παντοκράτορος πατὸς αἴτιος ὁ υἱὸς καθίσταται, πρωτοουργὸς κινήσεως δύναμις, ἄληπτος αἰσθήσει.

¹²² *Strom.* VI 148, 6: οὕτως τῇ καθολικῇ τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίᾳ διὰ τῶν προσεχέστερον κινουμένων καθ' ὑπόβασιν εἰς τὰ ἐπὶ μέρους διαδίδεται ἡ δραστικὴ ἐνέργεια.

¹²³ *Strom.* VI 161, 6.

¹²⁴ Abraham P. Bos has published numerous articles on *De mundo* and argues in favour of its authenticity. Cf. "Notes on Aristotle's *De mundo* Concerning the Discussion of Its Authenticity," *Philosophical Inquiry* 1 (1979) 141–153; "Supplementary Notes on the *De mundo*," *Hermes* 119 (1991) 312–332, with reference to Jonathan Barnes, *CR* 27 (1977) 40–43 (on Giovanni Reale's Italian translation of and commentary on *De mundo*). When assessing *De mundo*, it is important to determine the relationship of the fragment of Chrysippus found in a text attributed to Areius Didymus that survived in Stobaeus on the one hand and the text of *De mundo*, on the other. According to Barnes and Reale, Chrysippus depends on *De mundo* and not the other way around, which for Barnes would argue for an early date for *De mundo*. I do not want to go into the debate on the authenticity of *De mundo*. The Aristotelian references in Clement require further study. *De mundo* 6 will be especially significant for that. In a detailed analysis of Clement's *Protr.* 66, 4, Bos has shown that this doxographic document should be understood in the tradition of *De mundo* 6. The relationship of *Protr.* 66, 4

metaphor of the Persian king's palace. The invisible king, sitting in the remotest room of the palace, governs the huge empire with the help of servants or middlemen.¹²⁵ *De mundo* uses this metaphor in order to establish a contrast. Unlike the Persian king, God does not need all these civil servants, but rather governs the world with just an impulse, an invisible impulse, that penetrates everything and stirs it up. The degree to which this happens varies, depending on their distance from the highest God. By an initial movement, God passes the *dynamis* to the first one, to the next and so forth, until in the end it reaches human affairs, albeit increasingly weakened as it moves along the chain of participants.

So too the divine nature, by simple movement of that which is nearest to it, imparts its power to that which next succeeds, and thence further and further until it extends over all things.¹²⁶

The text of *De mundo* is being used here only as a comparison. Clement comes very close to the content of *De mundo* 6, but the vocabulary used by Clement is quite different. In *Strom.* VII 8, 5 there is a clear indication that Clement adopts the language of Plato's *Laws* X, a reference text to a broad section of the first third of the seventh book.¹²⁷ This sentence is a further testimony of this. Πρωτουργός κινήσεως δύναμις refers to the text of the *Laws*.¹²⁸ The soul, says Plato, directs everything in heaven, on earth, and in the water through her primary movements. Nothing, not even the smallest thing, remains neglected. But let us return to Clement and *De mundo*.

to *De mundo* 397b25 had already been noted by Stählin in the GCS edition. Cf. *Protr.* 66, 4–5: καὶ ὁ γε τῆς αἰρέσεως πατήρ, τῶν ὄλων οὐ νοήσας τὸν πατέρα, τὸν καλούμενον ὕπατον ψυχὴν εἶναι τοῦ παντὸς οἶεται· τουτέστι τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ψυχὴν θεὸν ὑπολαμβάνων αὐτὸς αὐτῷ περιπεύρεται. Ὅ γάρ τοι μέχρι τῆς σελήνης αὐτῆς διορίζων τὴν πρόνοιαν, ἔπειτα τὸν κόσμον θεὸν ἡγούμενος περιτρέπεται, τὸν ἄμοιρον τοῦ θεοῦ θεὸν δογματίζων. Ὅ δὲ Ἑρέσιος ἐκεῖνος Θεόφραστος ὁ Ἀριστοτέλους γνώριμος πῇ μὲν οὐρανόν, πῇ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸν θεὸν ὑπονοεῖ. Bos concentrates on the phrase τὸν καλούμενον ὕπατον ψυχὴν, which, according to Bos, points back by way of the Ζεὺς ὕπατος in *Iliad* VIII 3, to Aristotle's allegorical interpretation of this passage, which is also reflected in *De mundo*. Comparing it to other doxographic messages, Bos concludes that “the text from Clement's *protrepticus* is the only hard evidence for a form of immanence theology in Aristotle.” A.P. Bos, “Clement of Alexandria on Aristotle's (Cosmo-) Theology (Clem. *Protrept.* 5.66.4),” *CQ* 43 (1993) 177–188, here 184.

¹²⁵ *De mundo* 6, 398a10–398b6.

¹²⁶ *De mundo* 6, 398b19–22: Οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡ θεία φύσις ἀπὸ τίνος ἀπλῆς κινήσεως τοῦ πρώτου τὴν δύναμιν εἰς τὰ συνεχῆ διδωσι καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνων πάλιν εἰς τὰ πορρωτέρω, μέχρις ἂν διὰ τοῦ παντὸς διεξέλθῃ. Cf. similarly *De mundo* 6, 397b27–30; 399b10–12.

¹²⁷ Cf. Solmsen, “Providence and the Souls.”

¹²⁸ Plato, *Leg.* X 897a.

In *De mundo*, the hierarchical chain is understood in terms of greater or lesser distance and also in terms of decreasing power, ending with a weak effect on human affairs. According to *De mundo*, the being closest to the highest God is affected most by divine power. Clement understands the hierarchical chain more in terms of *pronoia*-related metaphors. Although speaking of the stronger versus the inferior, Clement does not generally turn to the idea of a decreasing effect of divine providence. His emphasis is on the Son of God being the cause and starting point of every form of providence. Moreover, according to Clement, the Son as the *dynamis* of the Father reaches the smallest beings easily,¹²⁹ the Son being the *arche*, the beginning, upon which the first, the second, the third, and finally human beings depend. Clement thinks of a sequence of successive subordinations.¹³⁰ In the handing down of God's *pronoia*, Clement ultimately integrates the gnostic, the less advanced Christian, and those who have to go through *paideia*. According to Clement, however, it is always the same *pronoia*, experienced by different people. This is the converse emphasis to the statement that *pronoia* reaches even into the smallest parts and leaves nothing out. However, there are elements in this train of thought that bring Clement very close to the notion of the attenuation of *pronoia*:

For the first and the second and the third depend on the one beginning principle that works according to the will of God; then, the blessed host of angels is placed at the outermost edge of the visible world, and then, descending down to us, a series in which each is lower than the last and all are saved and themselves save others by and through a single being. So just as the most remote particle of iron is moved by the soul of the magnetic stone, which extends even through many iron rings, so, drawn by the Holy Spirit, the virtuous settle in the first apartment and the others in turn down to the last; but those who are bad out of weakness ... fall down to the ground.¹³¹

Clement describes a change of sequentially subordinated beings dependent on the first cause, in which human beings ultimately have a place as well. It is revealing that Clement employs the image of the magnetic stone here.

¹²⁹ *Strom.* VII 9, 1.

¹³⁰ *Strom.* VII 8, 3.

¹³¹ *Strom.* VII 9, 3–4: ἀπὸ μιᾶς γὰρ ἄνωθεν ἀρχῆς τῆς κατὰ τὸ θέλημα ἐνεργούσης ἡρτῆται τὰ πρῶτα καὶ δεύτερα καὶ τρίτα· εἴτα ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ φαινομένου τῷ ἄκρῳ ἡ μακαρία ἀγγελοθεσία, καὶ δὴ μέχρις ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἄλλοι ὑπ' ἄλλοις ἐξ ἑνὸς καὶ δι' ἑνὸς σφύζοντοί τε καὶ σώζοντες διατετάχονται. ὥς οὖν συγκινεῖται καὶ μακροτάτῃ σιδήρου μοῖρα τῷ τῆς Ἡρακλείας λίθου πνεύματι διὰ πολλῶν τῶν σιδηρῶν ἐκτεινόμενῳ δακτυλίῳ, οὕτω καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι ἐλκόμενοι οἱ μὲν ἐνάρετοι οἰκιοῦνται τῇ πρώτῃ μονῇ, ἐφεξῆς δ' ἄλλοι μέχρι τῆς τελευταίας, οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ ἀσθενείας κακοὶ ... ἀποπίπτουσι χαμαί.

The image of the magnetic stone on which a series of pieces of iron can hang is about the emergence of a sequence and order by means of a force that penetrates the individual links and joins them together. The piece of iron that hangs on the magnet becomes magnetic itself and attracts other pieces. Clement speaks of iron rings. In Clement, we read that even the most remote piece of iron can be moved by the magnetic stone, or more precisely by the soul of the magnetic stone,¹³² since the magnet works through many iron rings. This image is Platonic. In Plato, it is the poet whose work is created not by craft but by divine power, and like a magnetic stone the poet passes on his enthusiasm to the rhapsodes, the choir leader, and the choir and all the way to the audience, captivating all of them. What Clement does not describe, and what is not foregrounded in Plato either, is the fact that the effect of the magnet decreases with distance. The image of the magnet was particularly well-suited to expressing the decreasing effect of divine power. There is an example of this in Philo:

A similar phenomenon is demonstrated by the magnetic stone. The iron ring that touches the stone itself is most powerfully affected, the ring next to the one touching is affected less, while the third hangs from the second, the fourth from the third, the fifth from the fourth, and so forth in a long series. They are held together by a single attractive force, but not to the same degree, for the rings which are suspended further away from the origin are held less and less tightly, the reason being that the attractive force weakens and is no longer able to constrain them in equal measure.¹³³

Clement does not go so far as to continue his metaphor of the magnet in *Strom.* VII 8 in the same spirit. However, it is in keeping with this image that the gnostic receives God's *pronoia* to a greater extent when he is closer to God. Here, in the gnostic's view, Clement stands in a tradition and is not reluctant to adopt—in a positive sense—the idea of a decreasing effect of divine *pronoia*. The status of the gnostic is explained within a concept of *pronoia* understood as the continuous passing on of the *pronoia* of the Logos.

The ideal gnostic is not at the end of the chain of *pronoia*—he also exercises *pronoia* and cares for those who are again subordinate to him. The

¹³² Cf. Aristotle, *De anima* I 2, 405a19–21.

¹³³ Philo, *De opificio mundi* 141 (trans. David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses*, Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1; Leiden: Brill, 2001, 84). The background of this simile in Clement and Philon is Plato, *Ion* 533d–e, as indicated by Stählin in his edition (GCS). The passage is referred to by Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (VChr Suppl. 3; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 206.

concept of *pronoia* therefore serves for Clement as a model for the life of the ideal Christian who is supposed to imitate the *pronoia* of the Son. The gnostic cares for himself and his neighbors, he governs, he is a judge, and he punishes those who deserve it according to *paideia*, but most of all the gnostic ideal is, according to Clement, visible in the task of the teacher. At this point the chain of *pronoia* can become very short, and the gnostic as the teacher can become the second image of God after the Son and the first Teacher.

APPENDIX:

FRAGMENTS FROM CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Περὶ προνοίας*

A text titled *Peri pronoias* was in circulation in the seventh century and was attributed to Clement of Alexandria¹³⁴ or identified with a text by Clement bearing the same title. The fragments are from Maximus Confessor, Anastasius Sinaita¹³⁵ and from a collection of definitions,¹³⁶ the *Definitiones patmenses* (Codex Patmensis 263 from the tenth century).¹³⁷ There are about twenty-two definitions in the *Definitiones patmenses* identified with the lemma Κλ (for Clemens). Apparently we are dealing with a collection of definitions that was traced back to Clement. Anastasius Sinaita was also referring to a collection of definitions when he wrote: "Ὅροι διάφοροι κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν καὶ πίστιν τῆς ἁγίας καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας λεγόμενοι, συλλεγέντες ἀπὸ τε Κλήμεντος καὶ ἑτέρων ὁσίων πατέρων."¹³⁸ The reason for identifying these

¹³⁴ Clement's *Fr.* 37 from Maximus Confessor (GCS 17²: 219, 15 f.).

¹³⁵ *Fr.* 37–43 (GCS 17²: 219–221).

¹³⁶ On the collections of definitions from end of the sixth and from the seventh century, see Karl-Heinz Uthemann, *Die "Philosophischen Kapitel" des Anastasius I. von Antiochien (559–598)*, OCP 46 (1980) 306–366, here 306–312.

¹³⁷ I am very grateful to Karl-Heinz Uthemann for providing me with his collation of the Codex Patmensis 263. Among the circa twenty-two fragments in Codex Patmensis 263 identified as lemmata from Clement (*Peri pronoias*), there are definitions of βούλησις (f.130, f.130^v), γνώσις (γνώσις ἐστὶν ἀληθῆς ἐπιστημονικὴ ἀπόδειξις τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀληθῆ φιλοσοφίαν παραδιδόμενων, f.132; τὴν γνώσιν οὐ λόγον ψιλὸν εἶναι φαμεν, ἀλλὰ τινα ἐπιστήμην θείαν etc., f.132^v), ἐγκράτεια (f.135), εὐδαιμονία (f.145), θέλησις (f.147^v = Maximus Confessor, PG 91, 276 = Clement's *Fr.* 40 [GCS 17²]), θανάτου μελέτη (f.150), τίς ὁ καθαρὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ (f.151), κάθαρσις (f.151^v), μεγαλοπρέπεια (f.156), οὐσία θεία (f.162^v = Ausschnitt aus Maximus Confessor, PG 91, 276 = Clement's *Fr.* 37 [GCS 17²]), πίστις (f.167), τέχνη (f.177^v), φύσις (f.187 = Anastasius I. von Antiochien, *Philosophische Kapitel* 96 [Uthemann, "Die Philosophischen Kapitel," 349]).

¹³⁸ Anastasius Sinaita, *Viae dux* II 1 (Uthemann, CCSG 8) = PsAthanasius, *Liber de definitionibus* (PG 28, 535a). Cf. Anastasius, *Viae dux* I 3, 73 (Uthemann, CCSG 8): Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ Κλήμης ὁ πολὺς ἐν σοφίᾳ καὶ γνώσει πεποίηκεν ἰδιαζόντως ὅρους ἐκκλησιαστικῶν δογμάτων.

definitions with the text *Peri pronoias* can probably be found in Maximus Confessor, in whose work several of the definitions from the *Definitiones patmenses* reappear, introduced as: Τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου Κλήμεντος πρεσβυτέρου Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐκ τοῦ Περί προνοίας. However, attention should be given to the fact that the references to Clement in the work of Anastasius diverge. Anastasius knows Clement as the author of the *Stromateis*¹³⁹ and, as already mentioned, as the author of a collection of dogmatic definitions. In his *Quaestiones et responsiones*,¹⁴⁰ Anastasius Sinaita also introduces a text as a quotation from Clement's *Peri pronoias*: Ὁ δὲ ἱερός καὶ ἀποστολικὸς διδάσκαλος Κλήμης ἐν τῷ Περί προνοίας καὶ δικαιοκρισίας Θεοῦ πρώτῳ λόγῳ τοιοῦτόν τι λέγει. It is interesting that it refers to the "apostolic teacher Clement," which suggests the Roman Clement. However, it should be noted that this quotation differs in length, structure, and character from the definitions, and that this quotation in particular is identified as an excerpt from *Peri pronoias*. This perhaps permits us to conclude that the text *Peri pronoias* and the collection of definitions attributed to Clement should be distinguished. It would explain why there is no lemma πρόνοια in the *Definitiones patmenses*. The quotation from Anastasius identified as coming from the *Peri pronoias* is far from Clement's style in the choice of words. Some of the definitions are perhaps closer to Clement's *Stromateis* in terms of content, for example, the lemmata γνώσις and πίστις.

For our purpose, two fragments are significant:

Maximus Confessor: On the Most Holy Clement, Presbyter from Alexandria, from his text *Peri pronoias*:

In God being is God. The divine being is eternal and without beginning, incorporeal and uncircumscribed, and the cause of what exists. Being is that which entirely subsists.

Nature is the truth of things,¹⁴¹ the fact that they really exist.¹⁴² According to some, it is the beginning of what has come to existence; and according to

¹³⁹ Cf. Anastasius Sinaita, *Florilegium adversus Monotheletas* 6, 1, 25–28 (Uthemann, CCSG 12): Ὅπερ καὶ ἐρμηνεύων ὁ σοφὸς Κλήμης ἐν τοῖς Στρωματεῦσί φησιν ὅτι “Ὡσπερ κατ’ οὐσίαν πληροὶ ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ σῶμα, οὕτω πληροὶ καὶ ζωοποιεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν κατ’ οὐσίαν.” Cf. also Clement's *Fr.* 39–41 from Maximus Confessor (GCS 17²: 220).

¹⁴⁰ 28, 12 (ed. Richard/Munitz, CCSG 59).

¹⁴¹ The same phrase (Φύσις ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθεια) appears in John Damascene, *Fragmenta philosophica* 32–33 (e cod. Oxon.Bodl. Auct. T.1.6 α' [11], Kotter, PTS 7).

¹⁴² Cf. the definition of *physis* in Anastasius Sinaita, *Viae dux* II 3 (Uthemann, CCSG 8): Περί φύσεως. Τί φύσις; καί, Ὅσαχῶς ἡ φύσις; καί, Κατὰ τί εἴρηται φύσις;

others, it is the *pronoia* of God, causing the beings to be and to be in a certain way.¹⁴³

This definition refers to distinctions between οὐσία and φύσις. *Pronoia* determines, according to one option, the realm of *physis*. The physical *ousia*, which embraces the existence of the created beings and their way of being, is set by God's *pronoia*.

Anastasius Sinaita:

Although it is still possible for God to create men in the manner of his previous creation of Adam, he no longer does so, having once given man the gift to create other human beings by saying to our nature "Increase, multiply, and fill the earth." Through his omnipotent and providential (προνοητική) power, he (Clement) says, [God] brings it about that the dissolution and end of the body is part of a certain natural sequence and order which happens through the blending and transformation of the elements, according to his essential divine knowledge and his apprehension.¹⁴⁴

This other interesting fragment was recorded by Anastasius. *Pronoia* is understood to mean the continuation of creation which is concerned with the preservation of the coming into being and passing away. This is explained as following the specific patterns related to the cosmic order in the transformation of elements.

¹⁴³ Clement's *Fr.* 37 (GCS 17²): Οὐσία ἐστὶν ἐπὶ θεοῦ θεός. οὐσία θεία ἐστὶν αἰδίδιον τι καὶ ἀναρχον ἀσώματόν τε καὶ ἀπερίγραπτον καὶ τῶν ὄντων αἴτιον. οὐσία ἐστὶν τὸ δι' ὅλου ὕφεστός. φύσις ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν παραγμάτων ἀλήθεια ἢ τούτων τὸ ἐνούσιον, κατὰ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους ἢ τῶν εἰς τὸ εἶναι παραγομένων γένεσις, καθ' ἑτέρους δὲ ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοια ἐμποιοῦσα τοῖς γινομένοις τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ πῶς εἶναι.

¹⁴⁴ *Fr.* 42 (GCS 17²) = Anastasius Sinaita, *Quaestiones et responsiones* 28, 12, 184–194 (Richard/Munitz, CCSG 59): "Ὡςπερ δυνατὸς ὢν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ νῦν ἀνθρωποπλαστεῖν ἀνθρώπους κατὰ τὴν προτέραν τοῦ Ἀδάμ διάπλασιν, οὐκέτι οὕτω ποιεῖ διὰ τὸ ἄπαξ χαρίσασθαι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ γεννᾶν ἀνθρώπους, εἰπὼν πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ἡμῶν τὸ *Αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν*. οὕτω φησί, τῇ παντεξουσίᾳ καὶ προνοητικῇ αὐτοῦ δυνάμει καὶ τὴν τῶν σωμάτων διάλυσιν καὶ τελευτήν, φυσικῇ τινι ἀκολουθίᾳ καὶ τάξει, τῇ τῶν στοιχείων κράσει καὶ μεταβολῇ οἰκονόμησε γενέσθαι κατὰ τὴν οὐσιώδη αὐτοῦ θεογνωσίαν καὶ κατὰλληψιν.

CLEMENT'S ANGELOLOGICAL DOCTRINES:
BETWEEN JEWISH MODELS AND PHILOSOPHIC-RELIGIOUS
STREAMS OF LATE ANTIQUITY

Monika Recinová

1. THE SOURCES OF CLEMENT'S ANGELOLOGY

Angelology is a constitutive element of Clement of Alexandria's theological project. For Clement the existence of angels was a part of revelation attested to by Scripture. Nevertheless, his own angelology is a consequence of the blending of several originally independent traditions. The belief in intermediary beings between the transcendent God and the material world formed a part of the generally accepted worldview of second-century Alexandria. As Eric Robertson Dodds remarks:

Virtually every one, pagan, Jewish, Christian or Gnostic, believed in the existence of these beings and their function as mediators, whether he called them daemons or angels or aions or simply 'spirits' (πνεύματα).¹

The angelological conceptions of the ancient church were not solely a Christian invention, but they derived from several originally independent traditions: the notion of angels as independent beings is, on the one hand, the heritage of biblical texts, and on the other, the later development of Jewish intertestamentary literature (in particular *Enoch* literature or *Jubilees*).

The exposition on daemons as subsistent intermediary beings was also a standard component of the Middle Platonist theological system, as can be seen e.g. from the *Didascalicus* of Alcinous.² The Middle Platonist worldview was similarly hierarchical and involved intermediary spirits. Between a transcendent God and the visible world was a ladder of intermediary beings

¹ Eric Robertson Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in the Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 38.

² Cf. Ludwig Früchtel, "Klemens von Alexandria und Albinus," *Philologische Wochenschrift* 57 (1937) 591–592.

represented by the Second Mind, the lesser gods, the stars, and the daemons governing the sensible universe.³

A crucial thinker who was the first to represent the junction of the biblical heritage and contemporary Middle Platonism was a Jew, Philo of Alexandria. Philo, influenced by Middle Platonism, identified in his *De gigantibus* 6 the Greek category of δαίμονες with the category of the (fallen) ἄγγελοι of the *Septuagint*. This identification assisted Philo and later Christian writers who followed him, such as Athenagoras of Athens⁴ and Clement of Alexandria, in creating a new synthesis between these two traditions.

The third source for Clement's angelology was the Gnostic speculations on different spiritual powers. Demonology formed a constant element of various Gnostic mythologies known to Clement. Clement's angelology can also be understood as an orthodox response to the Gnostic teaching concerning evil intermediary cosmic powers.

In the patristic period we do not encounter one definitive angelology of the Christian church, but diverse angelological doctrines of various Fathers of the church. As a result of these various sources, Clement's angelology also represents as a whole an original synthesis of the following different traditions: apocalyptic Jewish writings (*1 Enoch* in particular) in the first place; an older Christian angelology (particularly of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which Clement considered the canonical Scripture); in part the angelology and demonology of Philo of Alexandria; the Greek daemonology of the Platonist tradition, and, negatively, also Gnostic speculations about the heavenly world.

2. EARLIER SCHOLARSHIP ON CLEMENT'S ANGELOLOGICAL DOCTRINE

The aim of this survey is to present Clement's angelological doctrines in their context of intertestamentary Judaism and late Greek Antiquity. An important predecessor of these endeavours is the German scholar Friedrich Andres (†1947), who wrote a pioneering comparative treatise on the angelology of the early Greek apologists in its connection to Greek philosophical

³ William E.G. Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), xv.

⁴ On Philo's influence on Athenagoras see esp. David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen/Minneapolis: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1993), 105–109.

daemonology.⁵ This remarkable German scholar is also the author of the first and, as far as we know, the most comprehensive study on Clement's angelology, where it is also presented in the comparative perspective.⁶

From that time on, comparatively many other scholars embarked on research on Clement's angelology from different points of view. This current scholarship will be discussed in the course of this survey. The results of this scholarship show in various ways that Clement's angelology includes, besides the treatise on the nature of angels, some other very important angelological doctrines connected to Clement's Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, or theology of the spiritual ascent of the human soul. The aim of this paper is to survey these angelological doctrines of Clement against the background of Jewish and philosophic-religious streams of late antiquity.

3. CLEMENT'S EXTANT AND LOST WRITINGS ON ANGELOLOGY

The only extant patristic monograph on angelology from the age of antiquity is the *Celestial Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite from the late 5th century AD. Dionysian angelology constitutes a highly elaborated angelological doctrine which had an immense impact on later Byzantine and mediaeval angelological speculations. But—in spite of the clearly evident influence of the Neoplatonist philosophy on it—Dionysian angelology has substantially older roots in patristic literature. Its foundations were laid in the second century AD in the writings of Clement of Alexandria.

As follows from one remark in *Stromateis* VI, Clement himself intended to write a special treatise on angelology.⁷ Since, in the following text of this book, such a treatise does not occur, he probably planned it as a separate piece of writing. In Eusebius' list of Clement's extant writings in the *Church History*, however, such a treatise does not appear⁸ and so this work was probably never accomplished or was lost at a very early date. But if

⁵ Friedrich Andres, *Der Engellehre der griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts und ihr Verhältnis zur griechisch-römischen Dämonologie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1914).

⁶ Friedrich Andres, "Die Engel- und Dämonenlehre des Klemens von Alexandrien," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 34 (1936) 13–27; 139–140; 307–329.

⁷ *Strom.* VI 31, 5–32, 1 (Clément d'Alexandrie, *Les Stromates. Stromate VI*, ed. Patrick Descourtieux, SC 446, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999).

⁸ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* VI 3 (Eusèbe de Césarée, *Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres V–VIII*, ed. Gustav Bardy, SC 41, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1955).

this treatise ever existed it represented the first monograph on angelology in the ancient church, and we can only regret such a loss. As Georges Bareille remarks, Clement's treatise must have represented the beginnings of systematic Christian angelology, while the *Celestial Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius marks the achievements in this field during the centuries.⁹

Yet in 1962 Utto Riedinger proposed the hypothesis that the content of Clement's treatise *περὶ ἀγγέλων* was—together with the angelological passage of Clement's lost *Hypotyposeis*—preserved by later tradition after all, namely in a paraphrase in *Erotapokriseis* by Pseudo-Caesarius, originating in the sixth century in the same monastic milieu as *Corpus Dionysiacum*.¹⁰ Among modern researchers, Bogdan Bucur mentions Riedinger's hypothesis to support his own thesis of Clement's influence on Pseudo-Dionysius;¹¹ Alain Le Boulluec, however, does not consider Riedinger's hypothesis convincing.¹²

Clement also planned to write a special treatise dealing with the relationship between pagan δαίμονες and the (fallen) angels of Jewish-Christian tradition, which is of fundamental importance for the comparative study of Clement's angelology but is unfortunately equally lost. Before Clement, Philo of Alexandria maintained the identity between pagan δαίμονες and Jewish (fallen) angels but we do not have any evidence that Clement followed Philo in this respect.

Since Clement's own systematisation of his angelological doctrine is missing, we are entirely dependent on interspersed remarks concerning angelology across the corpus of his extant writings. Many important angelological remarks can be found in the so-called 'canonical Clement' of *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus*, and the *Stromateis*.¹³ The angelological passage at the beginning of *Stromateis* VII is of particular importance.¹⁴ Neverthe-

⁹ Georges Bareille, "Angélogologie d'après les Pères," in A. Vacant (ed.) *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (Paris: Librairie Letouzey, 1903–), vol. I/2, 1192–1222; cf. Jean Daniélou, *The Angels and their Mission: According to the Fathers of the Church* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1957), 84.

¹⁰ Edition: Pseudo-Kaisarios, *Die Erotapokriseis*, ed. Rudolf (Utto) Riedinger (GCS 58; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989), 43–47; see also: Utto Riedinger, "Eine Paraphrase des Engel-Traktates von Klemens von Alexandria in den Erotapokriseis des Pseudo-Kaisarios?" *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 73 (1962) 253–271.

¹¹ Bogdan G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (VChr Suppl. 95; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 34.

¹² Clément d'Alexandrie, *Les Stromates. Stromate VII*, ed. Alain Le Boulluec (SC 428; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), 44, n. 2.

¹³ Term by Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 8.

¹⁴ *Strom.* VII 9, 1–11, 3.

less Clement's most important angelological doctrines are contained in his private notes and more esoteric collections of fragments: in *Excerpta ex Theodoto*,¹⁵ *Adumbrationes*,¹⁶ *Hypotyposeis*,¹⁷ and *Eclogae propheticae*.¹⁸ These Clementine writings receive substantially less attention in patristic research, as can be seen e.g. from the fact that in great part, we still do not possess scholarly translations of these fragments into modern languages. Because of this some of Clement's angelological doctrines are relatively less well-known.

4. CLEMENT'S ANTHROPOLOGY AND ANGELOLOGY

According to Origen's first systematic theological treatise, *De principiis*, human souls—conceived as preexistent by Origen—and angelic beings were created equal in nature at the beginning as a result of God's justice: God could not create some spirits less perfect than others. They were all equipped with free will and all of them fell, except the soul of the Son of God. Some of them became angels of different orders, some human souls, and some evil devils. All assumed a body of a certain quality. At the end of time they all have to be purified and once again attain their original spiritual and perfect state (ἀποκατάστασις).¹⁹

Unlike Origen, Clement of Alexandria did not maintain the doctrine of the pre-existence of human souls.²⁰ According to him, the souls were created together with the body and at the beginning were not equal to angels. However, in his opinion, there is not an inseparable gap between human souls and angels: souls are immortal and through spiritual progress the souls of perfect gnostics can attain equality to angels even here in this life and, finally, after death (Clement's concept of ἰσαγγέλια).

According to Clement, the angels are also God's creatures. They were created as good and equipped with free will. They are infinite in number.²¹

¹⁵ Particularly rich in angelological doctrines is the passage of Clement's *Exc.* 10–15 (Clément d'Alexandrie, *Extraits de Théodote*, ed. François Sagnard, SC 23, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1970).

¹⁶ *Adumbr. ad 1 Pet* 3:22 (Clemens Alexandrinus, *Dritter Band. Fragmente*, ed. Otto Stählin, Ludwig Früchtel and Ursula Treu, GCS 17, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970).

¹⁷ *Hypotyposeis*, fr. 23 (GCS 17).

¹⁸ *Ecl.* 56, 1–57, 1 (GCS 17).

¹⁹ Cf. for example: Cécile Blanc, "L'angélologie d'Origène," *SP* 14/3 (TU 117) (1976) 79–109.

²⁰ Cf. Jean Hering, *Étude sur la doctrine de la chute et de la préexistence des âmes chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1923), 28–34.

²¹ *Strom.* VII 63, 1.

Ἡ μακαρία ἀγγελοθεσία is situated “at the highest extremity of the visible world,” and is ranged in different orders.²² They represent “the best created natures, the nearer in place to God, purer and partaker of the eternal and blessed life.”²³

The nature of angels is discussed in particular in a passage of Clement’s *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 10–15. The most heterodox point presented here, from the later point of view of angelology, is the question of the corporeality of angels. Both modern editors of *Excerpta*, Robert Pierce Casey and François Sagnard, attribute this angelological passage of *Excerpta* to Clement himself. According to Casey, Clement’s authorship is supported by the fact that

the angelology of *Excerpta* is indeed not systematically presented in a separate book of *Stromateis* but is reflected with varying degrees of clearness in the *Stromateis* and *Hypotyposes*. The principal passage is *Strom.* VII 9–11.²⁴

According to the above-mentioned passage of the *Excerpta*, not only angels but also archangels, the seven highest angels (the protoctists), and even the Son himself are not without form and body, a quality which corresponds to their position in the hierarchy.²⁵ Yet their bodies do not resemble the bodies of the sensible world, but are extremely pure.²⁶ The corporeality of the angels is graded: in comparison with the bodies of the stars the angels are incorporeal and without form, but in comparison with Logos, who is above them, they are bodily and sensible. Similarly, Logos has certain corporeality in comparison with the transcendent Father.²⁷ If they are called ‘incorporeal,’ it is not because they do not have a body but as compared with the bodies of saved pneumatics.²⁸ Because of their corporeality the angels can be seen.²⁹

In *Stromateis* VI Clement mentions the idea that angels have a voice, but rejects the notion that they have vocal organs similar to those of human beings.³⁰ The ‘voice’ of daemons, which does not come from vocal organs and which Clement incorporates in his angelology, was a motif of the philosophical daemonology of his time, testified to by Plutarch and Maximus of

²² *Strom.* VII 9, 3.

²³ *Strom.* VII 5, 2.

²⁴ *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, ed. Robert Pierce Casey (London: Christophers, 1934), 30 f.

²⁵ *Exc.* 10, 1.

²⁶ *Exc.* 10, 3.

²⁷ *Exc.* 11, 3.

²⁸ *Exc.* 14, 1.

²⁹ *Exc.* 14, 2.

³⁰ *Strom.* VI 57, 4.

Tyre.³¹ Clement considers the possibility of men talking with God according to the model of dialogue between angels.³²

Salvatore Lilla supposed that this materialistic conception of the angels does not correspond to Clement's general tendency to regard the higher beings as incorporeal.³³ Both editors of Clement were also aware of this discrepancy.³⁴ According to Lilla, this passage is far more likely to belong to a Gnostic writer, perhaps to Theodotus himself, rather than to Clement.³⁵

Nevertheless, Photius, who still had Clement's lost *Hypotyposeis* available, attests that here Clement maintained the teaching of the intercourse of angels with earthly women, with whom they begot offspring.³⁶ Despite Lilla's presupposition, it is probable that Clement really taught the graded corporeality of angels. In contrast to Origen, the corporeality of angels is, according to Clement, not the result of the fall, but represents nature. Accordingly, Clement is not a dualist and does not demonize material body.

5. THE 'CELESTIAL HIERARCHY' IN CLEMENT

The spiritual cosmos of Clement of Alexandria is multi-storeyed. According to Clement, between a wholly transcendent God and the material world there exists the hierarchy of celestial spirits. Such a hierarchical conception of the world was common not only in Jewish-Christian apocalyptic writings such as the *Ascension of Isaiah*, *2 Enoch*, or *Epistula Apostolorum*, but also the contemporaneous Middle Platonism and Gnosticism.

The most perfect and nearest to God is the divine Logos,³⁷ "to Him is placed in subjection all the host of angels and gods."³⁸ As regards the 'gods,'

³¹ Cf. Alain Le Boulluec, *Alexandrie antique et chrétienne. Clément et Origène* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 76.

³² *Strom.* VII 36, 5–37, 5.

³³ Cf. Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 179, n. 6.

³⁴ Casey, *The Excerpta*, 14–15; Sagnard, *Extraits de Théodote*, 12–15.

³⁵ Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 179. Also according to Andres, Clement did not express himself clearly as regards the question of the corporeality of angels, which he probably wanted to discuss in his lost treatise on angelology, cf. Andres, "Die Engel- und Dämonenlehre des Klemens," 16.

³⁶ Cf. *Hypotyposeis*, fr. 23 (GCS 17). For discussion on this passage cf. Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria on Trial. The Evidence of "Heresy" from Photius' Bibliotheca* (VChr Suppl. 101; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 145–158.

³⁷ *Strom.* VII 5, 3.

³⁸ *Strom.* VII 5, 6.

Clement often uses this expression for angels, or perfected human souls. These angels, who are placed at the apex of the visible world, are arranged in different orders. The higher angels affect lower angelic orders in order to illuminate and elevate them and they themselves are illuminated and saved by those higher than them. Such a conception is reminiscent of the Dionysian idea of the mutual illumination of angelic orders, as Clement says:

For on one original first Principle, which acts according to the Father's will, the first and the second and the third depend. Then at the highest extremity of the visible world is the blessed band of angels; and down to ourselves, there are ranged, some under others, those who, from One and by One, both are saved and save.³⁹

Clement discerns in principle three levels of celestial hierarchy according to the scale of being which is the model of the ecclesial hierarchy: angels, archangels,⁴⁰ and the seven highest angels (πρωτόγονοι ἀγγέλων ἄρχοντες),⁴¹ the 'first created' (πρωτοκτίστοι ἄγγελοι),⁴² who are at the summit of the spiritual world and are subjected to the Logos. The nine angelic orders was a later invention of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. According to the *Adumbrationes*, the first order is represented by angels, the second order by *potestates*, and the third order by *virtutes*.⁴³ Nevertheless, in Clement, too, some appellations of later Dionysian angelic orders can be found: in *Stromateis* VI Clement calls God the Lord of powers (δυνάμεων), principalities (ἀρχῶν), and authorities (ἐξουσιῶν).⁴⁴

6. THE 'CHURCH HIERARCHY' AS AN IMAGE OF THE 'CELESTIAL HIERARCHY'

It is well known that the first church father who taught the analogy between the visible earthly hierarchy of the church and the invisible hierarchy of the divine world was Ignatius of Antioch:

And do ye reverence them as Christ Jesus, of whose place they are the keepers, even as the bishop is the representative of the Father of all things, and

³⁹ *Strom.* VII 9, 3.

⁴⁰ *Strom.* VI 57, 5.

⁴¹ *Strom.* VI, 143, 1.

⁴² E.g. *Exc.* 10, 1.

⁴³ *Adumbr. ad 1 Pet* 3:22.

⁴⁴ *Strom.* VI 30, 5.

the presbyters are the sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the apostles of Christ.⁴⁵

Clement of Alexandria was—after Ignatius and long before Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who followed him—the first ecclesiastical writer who developed this idea further. Clement did not use the word ‘hierarchy,’ popularized by Pseudo-Dionysius’ writings, but the idea is similar. According to Clement, “the grades here in the church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory.”⁴⁶ Clement also states the same idea in *Strom.* VII: in the church hierarchy the elders cause improvement (θεραπεία βελτιωτική); the deacons serve (θεραπεία ὑπηρετική). Similar services are administered by angels subject to God in their earthly affairs, as well as by the true gnostic:

Similarly, also, in the church, the elders attend to the department which has improvement for its object; and the deacons to the ministerial. In both these ministries the angels serve God, in the management of earthly affairs; and the gnostic himself ministers to God, and exhibits to men the scheme of improvement.⁴⁷

7. SEVEN FIRST-CREATED ANGELS

The notion of the seven highest angelic spirits stems from the old Jewish tradition.⁴⁸ In the Old Testament, this notion appears for the first time in the book of *Tobit*.⁴⁹ Seven angels also appear in *1 Enoch*.⁵⁰ In the canon of the New Testament they are mentioned several times in the book of *Revelation*⁵¹ and are also present in early Christian literature: Clement’s designation of the ‘first created’ angels (πρωτοκτίστοι ἄγγελοι)⁵² may come

⁴⁵ Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Trall.* 3, 1 (Ignace d’Antioche, *Lettres*, ed. Pierre Thomas Camelot, SC 10, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1945).

⁴⁶ *Strom.* VI 107, 2.

⁴⁷ *Strom.* VII 3, 4.

⁴⁸ For a bibliography on discussion concerning the possible origin of the idea of seven high spirits see especially: Joseph Barbel, *Christos Angelos. Die Anschauung von Christus als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur des christlichen Altertums* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1941), 195, n. 62; cf. also Jean Przyluski, “Les sept puissances divines en Grèce,” *RHPhR* 18 (1939) 255–262; idem, “Les sept puissances divines dans l’Inde et l’Iran,” *RHPhR* 16 (1936) 500–507.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Tob* 12:15.

⁵⁰ *1 En.* 20:1 (*The Book of Enoch*, trans. Robert H. Charles, London: S.P.C.K., 121970).

⁵¹ *Rev* 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; 8:2.

⁵² On Protocists in Clement see in particular: Barbel, *Christos Angelos*, 198–202; Alain

from the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which mentions the seven *πρώτοι κτισθέντες ἄγγελοι*.⁵³

Clement speaks about them in the passage of *Excerpta* 10–12 but also in several places in his other writings.⁵⁴ According to *Excerpta* 10, 4, they were created perfect from the beginning and accepted their perfection from the Son. In Clement they are usually seven but according to certain indications of Clement's more secret doctrines, the lower angelic beings and even human souls who attain perfection can be purified to the state of these first-created angels.⁵⁵

They are seven distinct beings but they are in perfect unity and equality.⁵⁶ Their liturgy is unanimous.⁵⁷ They unceasingly contemplate 'the face of God,' i.e. the Son,⁵⁸ through whom they have knowledge of the Father.⁵⁹ In *Excerpta* a certain very fine corporeality is attributed to them.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Clement emphasizes here that they do not discern by sensual eyes but by the eye of the intellect.⁶¹ They see the Son and themselves are seen by the immediately lower angelic order, i.e. the archangels.⁶² They serve as their high priests.⁶³ The seven first-created angels correspond to the heavenly thrones⁶⁴ because "God dwells in them."⁶⁵ They are the mediators of four covenants before the coming of Christ,⁶⁶ such as the deeds performed to the glory of God.⁶⁷

Le Boulluec, *Clément d'Alexandrie. Les Stromates. Stromate V. Tome II: Commentaire, bibliographie et index* (SC 279; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1981), 143–144; Jean Daniélou, *Message évangélique et culture hellénique aux IIe et IIIe siècles* (Paris: Desclee, 1961), 221–222; Bucur, *Clement's Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 38–41.

⁵³ Herm. Vis. III 4, 1 (*The Apostolic Fathers, The Shepherd of Hermas*, ed. Michael W. Holmes, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).

⁵⁴ Especially in *Ecl.* 51, 1–52, 1; 56, 7; 57; *Strom.* V 35, 1 (Clemens Alexandrinus, *Zweiter Band. Stromata Buch I–VI*, ed. Otto Stählin, Ludwig Früchtel and Ursula Treu, GCS 15, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985); VI 143, 1.

⁵⁵ *Ecl.* 57, 1–5.

⁵⁶ *Exc.* 10, 3.

⁵⁷ *Exc.* 11, 4.

⁵⁸ Cf. Matt 18:10.

⁵⁹ *Exc.* 10, 6; 12, 1; 27, 3; *Ecl.* 56, 7; 57, 4–5.

⁶⁰ *Exc.* 10, 1.

⁶¹ *Exc.* 10, 6.

⁶² *Exc.* 12, 1.

⁶³ *Exc.* 27, 3.

⁶⁴ Cf. Col 1:16.

⁶⁵ *Ecl.* 57, 1.

⁶⁶ *Ecl.* 51, 1.

⁶⁷ *Ecl.* 37, 2.

Of particular interest is Clement's connection of the seven first-born angels with the seven days of creation.⁶⁸ In *Ecl.* 56 they are connected with the stars, in particular the ἀρχοντικὸς ἄγγελος with the sun. This is the place of supreme contemplation of God where, at the last judgment, the just will stand with the apostles. They are also connected with days.⁶⁹ This awareness of the number seven and the connection of angels with the days became increasingly significant in Christian thinking.⁷⁰

8. THE FALL AND REDEMPTION OF THE ANGELIC WORLD IN CLEMENT'S VIEW

According to Floyd, Clement's angelology is formed—despite the incompleteness of our sources—of three parts: before the fall, after the fall, and the final judgment.⁷¹ According to Clement, the angels were created by God as good and equipped with free will.⁷² Before the fall they were classified in three orders, enjoyed the vision of God, and hence were acquainted with the eternal truths.⁷³

The fall of the angels was one of the doctrines of Jewish apocalyptic literature. In his interpretation of the fall of a part of the angelic world, Clement is heavily dependent on this source. According to the exegesis of Gen 6:2 in *1 Enoch*, one of the higher angelic orders, the Watchers, were seduced by the beauty of earthly women and came down into the world. Clement takes over the basic elements of this narrative.⁷⁴ This is the origin of demons, which were removed as far as possible from God.

The narrative of the fall of the lower emanations of the spiritual world (*pleroma*) was also a core of the Gnostic myth of the origin of cosmic evil. The Gnostic demonology was a combination of various elements: it incorporated the intermediaries of Platonic dualism, the evil spirits of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and the astrological magic of Persia.⁷⁵ According to Basilides, the ultimate consequence of this fall was the creation of the

⁶⁸ Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning, and Development of the Pauline Phrase hai archai kai hai exousiai* (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), 156.

⁶⁹ Cf. Marie-Thérèse D'Alverny, "Les anges et les jours," *Cahiers archeologiques* 9 (1957) 271–278.

⁷⁰ Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, 156.

⁷¹ Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, 66.

⁷² *Strom.* I 83, 2.

⁷³ *Strom.* V 10, 2.

⁷⁴ *Strom.* III 59, 2.

⁷⁵ Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, 64.

material world.⁷⁶ Hence the influence of the demonic was felt in the whole of creation and for human souls the return to the *pleroma* was blocked by these intermediary demons.

Clement of Alexandria was aware of this Gnostic explanation of evil in creation but, according to him, the evil in the natural world cannot be ascribed to these fallen powers of the heavenly world. Clement explains evil not by demonic order but by sinful will, both angelic and human. The solution of the problem of evil comes from God's redemptive act on the cross of Christ. In comparison to the Gnostic pessimistic worldview, Clement maintained an essentially optimistic Christian conception. According to Clement, the world was created by good God himself through the mediation of his Son, not by fallen spiritual powers. Clement cites the Epistle to the Romans 8:38–39 in the sense that even these (fallen) angels are not able to separate the perfect gnostic from God's love.⁷⁷

According to Clement, demons are greedy for bloody sacrifices and are worshipped in the guise of idols. These demons, however, play a significantly less important part in Clement's thought.⁷⁸ Clement does not develop a theology of evil powers. Clement had no experience or philosophy of mighty evil forces, and his theology consequently shows little interest in them. The situation of others, especially some Gnostics and Origen, was quite different and their experience demanded another doctrine of salvation.⁷⁹

Before Clement, Justin regarded the fall of the angels as irreversible.⁸⁰ Clement, by contrast, was more inclined towards the possibility of ultimate reconciliation with God, but was not as clear as Origen, who taught final ἀποκατάστασις—the ultimate reparation of all evil, including the demonic order, by the healing power of Logos. Clement surely shares this opinion with respect to sinful believers, but holds that the salvation of Satan and his powers depends wholly on their free will alone.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I 24, 3–6 (Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les Hérésies I*, ed. Louis Doutreleau and Adelin Rousseau, SC 264, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1979); Hippolytus, *Ref.* VII 26, 6 (Hippolytus, *Werke. Dritter Band. Refutatio omnium haeresium*, ed. Paul Wendland, Leipzig: Hinrich, 1916).

⁷⁷ *Strom.* IV 96, 1–2.

⁷⁸ Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, 153.

⁷⁹ Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, 157.

⁸⁰ Justin, *1 Apol.* 28.57 (Justin, *Apologie pour les chrétiens*, ed. Charles Munier, SC 507, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2006).

⁸¹ *Paed.* III 44, 4 (Clemens Alexandrinus, *Erster Band. Protrepticus und Paedagogus*, ed. Otto Stählin and Ursula Treu, GCS 12, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972).

9. ANGELS AND TRINITY IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Angelomorphic Christology in Clement

Clement of Alexandria is one of the authors of the second century who employ angelomorphic terminology in his Christology. Clement calls Logos in his pre-incarnate state and educative role⁸² an angel who was later incarnated in Jesus.⁸³

For it is really the Lord (the Son) that was the instructor of the ancient people by Moses; but He is the instructor of the new people by himself, face to face. *For behold*, He says to Moses, *My angel shall go before thee* (Ex 32:34), representing the evangelical and commanding power of the Word, but regarding the Lord's prerogative. [...] Formerly the older people had an old covenant, and the law disciplined the people with fear, and the Word was an angel; but to the fresh and new people has been given a new covenant, and the Word has appeared, and fear is turned to love, and that mystic angel is born—Jesus.⁸⁴

The origins of this angelic nomenclature for Christ stem from the conception of Christ as the visible manifestation of God. The early Christian confession 'Jesus is Lord' made it possible to connect a pre-existing Jesus to angelomorphic figures identified with JHWH by the Old Testament scripture, 'the angel' among them.⁸⁵ Despite this angelomorphic passage, in many places Clement clearly considers Christ as an elevated head and instructor of the remaining angelic host.⁸⁶

Angelomorphic Pneumatology in Clement

Modern expositions of Clement's trinitarian doctrine predominantly discuss only the first two persons of the Trinity, the transcendent Father and the Logos (who is presumably slightly subordinated to the Father). Clement's pneumatology receives substantially less treatment.⁸⁷ Among contemporary scholars Bogdan G. Bucur holds the view—in the footsteps of Christian Oeyen,⁸⁸ a pioneering researcher on Clement's pneumatology—

⁸² Barbel, *Christos Angelos*, 95.

⁸³ Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology. Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 194.

⁸⁴ *Paed.* I 58, 1.

⁸⁵ Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 349–350.

⁸⁶ Barbel, *Christos Angelos*, 97.

⁸⁷ Cf. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 3.

⁸⁸ Christian Oeyen, "Eine frühchristliche Engelpneumatologie bei Klemens von Alexandria," *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 55 (1965) 102–120; 56 (1966) 27–47.

that Clement maintained the angelomorphic pneumatology. According to Bucur, the protocists, seven angelic spirits, are envisaged by Clement as the sevenfold Holy Spirit.⁸⁹ Clement of Alexandria was not the only Christian writer who interpreted these seven spirits on the basis of Isa 11:2 in the pneumatological sense.⁹⁰

10. THE ANGELS OF NATIONS AND GUARDIAN ANGELS

Clement takes over from Jewish apocalyptic literature⁹¹ the doctrine of the angels of nations that are allocated to countries and cities.⁹² God's providential care for men is accomplished by the service of 'nearby' angels.⁹³ Clement's idea of the guardian angels commissioned by God to care for individual men was not new in his time. Clement himself utilised both Platonic daemonology, where every person had their δαίμων,⁹⁴ and the post-exilic biblical tradition.⁹⁵ What was new was Clement's emphasis on the contribution of angels to the development of infants as regards their achieving of Christian gnosis.⁹⁶ In *Eclogae prophetae* Clement talks about angelic care for aborted infants.⁹⁷

In the homily *Quis dives* Clement talks about 'the angel of repentance.' Angels are also the instrument of God in accomplishing punishment after death.⁹⁸

11. ANGELS AND THE SPIRITUAL ASCENT OF THE HUMAN SOUL

Βίος ἀγγελικός of the True Gnostic

According to Clement, the host of 'angels and gods' is subjected to Christ. In Clement's conception these 'gods' are men who became similar to angels.

⁸⁹ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 73–80.

⁹⁰ Cf. Karl Schlütz, *Isaias 11,2 (die sieben Gaben des hl. Geistes) in den ersten vier christlichen Jahrhunderten* (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1932), on Clement of Alexandria see 75–81.

⁹¹ 1 En. 90, 22.

⁹² *Strom.* VI 157, 5; VII 6, 4.

⁹³ *Strom.* VII 12, 5; cf. also *Ecl.* 51, 2.

⁹⁴ Plato, *Resp.* X 620d5–e2; cf. also *Strom.* V 130, 3.

⁹⁵ Tob 3:25; NT: Matt 18:10, Acts 12:15; *Jub.* 35:11 (*The Book of Jubilees. A Critical Text*, ed. James C. Vanderkam, Leuven: Peeters, 1989).

⁹⁶ *Strom.* V 91, 3.

⁹⁷ *Ecl.* 41, 1; 48.

⁹⁸ *Strom.* V 90, 5–6.

This notion is more comprehensible in the light of Clement's doctrine of the graded progress of the perfect Christian⁹⁹ who proceeds from paganism to belief, from belief to knowledge and next to love. Such a man anticipates equality with the angels.¹⁰⁰ Clement determines the goal of the perfect gnostic as divinization, θεοποίησις.¹⁰¹ In other places Clement uses for this process the expression ἱσάγγελος, to become similar to the angels. Walther Völker demonstrated that for Clement the notions θεός and ἱσάγγελος are synonyms.¹⁰²

The angelification of human nature is reached by means of prayer;¹⁰³ the perfect gnostic is still pure for prayer and prays with angels as one who is already equal to them.¹⁰⁴ Next to prayer is ἀπάθεια, for "he who has moderated his passions and trained himself for impassibility, and developed to the beneficence of gnostic perfection, is equal to the angels";¹⁰⁵ when the true gnostic reaches ἀπάθεια, he becomes equal to the angels.¹⁰⁶ Gnosis is the most prominent way of reaching angelification.¹⁰⁷ At the summit of this spiritual transformation the perfect gnostic does not need the help of angels, but he gets help directly from God.¹⁰⁸

The angels are the spectators of the contest of the gnostic athlete.¹⁰⁹ He fights not against the body but against spiritual powers, which function through the body and induce passions.¹¹⁰ The angels and gods are spectators; and the contest, embracing all the varied exercises, is "not against flesh and blood," but against the spiritual powers of inordinate passions that work through the flesh.¹¹¹

⁹⁹ Suso Frank, *ΑΙΤΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ. Begriffsanalytische und begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum "Engelgleichen Leben" im frühen Mönchtum* (Münster Westfale: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964), 131.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Luke 2:36.

¹⁰¹ *Paed.* III 1, 5; *Strom.* IV 149; *Strom.* VI 113; *Strom.* VII 56. Cf. Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 121–140. (Unfortunately, in his comprehensive study, Russell does not discuss the doctrine of the angelification of human nature from Clement's *Ecl.*)

¹⁰² Cf. Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952), 604.

¹⁰³ *Paed.* II 79, 2; cf. Frank, *ΑΙΤΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ*, 132–133.

¹⁰⁴ *Strom.* VII 78, 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Strom.* VI 105, 1; cf. VII 57, 5; 78, 6; 84, 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Strom.* IV 155, 4; cf. Frank, *ΑΙΤΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ*, 133–134.

¹⁰⁷ *Strom.* IV 155, 4; cf. Frank, *ΑΙΤΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ*, 134–135.

¹⁰⁸ *Strom.* VII 81, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. 1 Cor 4:9.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Eph 6:12.

¹¹¹ *Strom.* VII 20, 3–4.

*The Spiritual Ascent of the Human Soul
and 'Angels of the Gate' in Clement*

Clement shared the worldview of Jewish Christian apocalyptic literature, with its multi-storey cosmos. For him salvation is connected with knowledge. On the basis of his cosmology progress is understood by him as an ascent.¹¹² The gnostic, free of passions, becomes similar to the angels.¹¹³ The goal of belief is to become like the angels, who descend and ascend the ladder of hierarchy. Its highest level allows the contemplation of divine reality.¹¹⁴ This hierarchical order will also persist eschatologically at the end of all things.¹¹⁵ The idea of the spiritual ascent ('Himmelreise') of the human soul through different heavens was also current in Gnosticism.

In Gnosticism the different heavens of the cosmic ladder were guarded by evil archons, 'guardians of the gate,' who represented danger for the ascending gnostic soul. In the cosmology of the Ophites, each of the seven heavens of the visible cosmos was occupied by an archon and in order to pass the gnostic soul had to pronounce a special formula and show the archon a kind of 'free pass.'¹¹⁶ Clement alludes to this Gnostic myth in *Excerpta* 27. This part represents the exegesis of the entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies as the entry of the gnostic soul into the celestial world and its deification.

Clement also believes in the existence of angels who look after the ascent of the gnostic soul through the heavens and its final deification.¹¹⁷ Their task is to help the soul in its ascent. They stop those souls which are not fully purified of material things and free from passions.¹¹⁸ In Clement's conception, the soul also has to show these angels or powers a 'card' (σύμβολον) representing its purity and righteous deeds on earth.¹¹⁹

The impact of Gnosticism on Clement is undeniable here. The difference between both conceptions is nevertheless substantial. Gnosticism has a pes-

¹¹² Cf. Athanas Recheis, *Engel, Tod und Seelenreise. Das Wirken der Geister beim Heimgang des Menschen in der Lehre der alexandrinischen und kappadokischen Väter* (Rome: Storia e letteratura, 1958), 147–150; D. Wilhelm Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise der Seele," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 4 (1901) 136–273; Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 173–189.

¹¹³ *Strom.* VI 105.

¹¹⁴ *Ecl.* 57.

¹¹⁵ *Ecl.* 56; cf. Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, 156.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Origen, *Cels.* VI 31 (Origenes, *Contra Celsum libri VIII*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich, Leiden: Brill, 2001).

¹¹⁷ *Strom.* IV 116, 2.

¹¹⁸ *Strom.* IV 117, 2.

¹¹⁹ *Strom.* IV 16, 2; VII 83, 1; cf. Recheis, *Engel, Tod und Seelenreise*, 147–150.

simistic view of the material cosmos. The rulers of the individual heavens are evil powers under the direction of the lower demiurge of the material world. By contrast Clement, as an orthodox Christian, evaluates the material cosmos positively. The visible world is not a product of the fall but a good work of the divine Logos. The rulers of the different heavens are not evil powers but good angels who were entrusted by God with their task of looking after the spiritual ascent of human souls. While in Gnosticism the ascent was a fight against evil cosmic powers, in Clement's conception the defeat of these powers does not represent a key concept of salvation.¹²⁰

The doctrine of angels was a part of the more esoteric teaching of the Alexandrine catechetical school. As was demonstrated by André Méhat, Clement followed the division of Christian philosophy into physics, ethics, and epoptics. Angelology was a part of epoptics, which was the apex of the Christian Gnostic initiation.¹²¹ Like the Gnostics, Clement presupposed a gap between a transcendent God and the visible Word. But unlike the Gnostics he saw it bridged rather by the Logos himself, instead of the intermediary beings of demons. Clement also warned against the exaggerated veneration of angels,¹²² whom he regarded as created beings and auxiliaries to men.

'Angelification' of Human Nature

In his more public writings, such as *Quis dives salvetur* and *Paedagogus*, Clemens outlines a more common Christian eschatological doctrine, i.e. the resurrection of the body. At the end of his homily on Mark 10:17–31 he says:

... resurrection for which we hope; when at the end of the world, the angels, radiant with joy, hymning and opening the heavens, shall receive into the celestial abodes those who truly repent; and before all, the Saviour himself goes to meet them ... conducting them to the Father's bosom, to eternal life, to the kingdom of heaven.¹²³

¹²⁰ Carr, *Angels and Principalities*, 155–156.

¹²¹ André Méhat, "Θεὸς Ἀγάπη: Une hypothèse sur l'objet de la gnose orthodoxe," *SP* 9 (TU 94) (1966), 82–86; André Méhat, *Étude sur les Stromates de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 488.

¹²² Cf. Peter John Koets, *Δεισιδαιμονία. A Contribution to the Knowledge of the Religious Terminology in Greek* (Purmerend: J. Muusses, 1929), 87–91.

¹²³ *Quis dives* 42, 15–16 (GCS 17).

In his *Paedagogus* addressed to less advanced Christians Clement also declares the resurrection of the body to be the final realization of human 'enlightenment'.¹²⁴

In Clement's private notes and more esoteric writings, such as *Stromateis* and *Adumbrationes*, his more mystical doctrine of the angelification and deification of the human soul appears,¹²⁵ which can be anticipated here on earth in the perfect life (*bios angelikos*) of the true gnostic, but can only be fully accomplished in the life to come. Human souls, which were created by God together with the human body, and which are not immortal by nature, can attain incorruptibility through painstaking development and by divine grace,¹²⁶ and become similar to the angels. The passionless life of the perfect gnostic assimilates him to the angels.

12. PHILOSOPHY AS A GIFT OF GOOD ANGELS IN CLEMENT¹²⁷

In *1 Enoch* the biblical sentence about 'the sons of God' who descended to the daughters of men (Gen 6:1–4) was interpreted in the sense of the fall of some angels from the heavenly world to the earth. The teaching which these fallen angels communicated to the earthly women represented the corrupted or incomplete form of celestial wisdom. The roots of this apocryphal Jewish doctrine are to be found in the mythology of the ancient Near East, rather than in Greek mythology. As stated above, *1 Enoch* was very popular among early Christian writers.¹²⁸ The little-known apologist Hermias is the first Christian author according to whom Greek philosophy also comes from these fallen angels.¹²⁹

Clement of Alexandria mentions various theories of the origin of Greek philosophy; one of them is the myth of the fall of angels from *1 Enoch*. Clement's view on the origin of Greek philosophy underwent an evolution: in the first book of the *Stromateis* he states that the whole philosophy originated from the inspiration of certain descended powers (δυνάμεις).¹³⁰

¹²⁴ *Paed.* I 28, 3–5; cf. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: University Press, 1991), 46.

¹²⁵ Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 46.

¹²⁶ *Adumbr.* *1 Pet* 1:3.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Strom.* VII 6, 4.

¹²⁸ Cf. Elaine Pagels, "Christian Apologists and the Fall of the Angels," *HTR* 78 (1985) 301–325.

¹²⁹ Richard Bauckham, "The Fall of the Angels as the Source of Philosophy in Hermias and Clement of Alexandria," *VChr* 39 (1985) 313–330.

¹³⁰ *Strom.* I 80, 5.

A little further on he hints at the myth of Prometheus:¹³¹ this thief could be some power or angel who was aware of a piece of the truth. Clement develops this motif of the origin of philosophy from the fallen angels further in *Stromateis* V.¹³²

In the first book—presumably in a polemic against Hermias—Clement defends the view in the sense of his generally positive evaluation of Greek philosophy that even if Greek philosophy was brought to the earth by the fallen angels, these angels communicated the true philosophy to people. God in his providence allowed this theft, because the gift was not so harmful.¹³³

Finally, in book seven,¹³⁴ Clement expresses still another theory of the angelic origin of Greek philosophy: the originator of Greek philosophy is the divine Logos himself, who communicated it to the Greeks by the medium of inferior good angels. He probably meant the angels of nations and cities mentioned in book six.¹³⁵

¹³¹ *Strom.* I 81, 4.

¹³² *Strom.* V 10, 2.

¹³³ *Strom.* I 83, 2; cf. 87, 1.

¹³⁴ *Strom.* VII 5, 5; 6, 4.

¹³⁵ *Strom.* VI 157, 5.

CLEMENT ON SUPERSTITION AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF

George Karamanolis

1. INTRODUCTION

In the preface to the sixth book of the *Stromateis*, Clement announces that the sixth and seventh books of his work will develop an ethical discourse (ἡθικὸς λόγος), which will present the way of life of the true Christian gnostic.¹ This presentation, Clement tells us, involves an argument to the effect that the gnostic is not an atheist, as has been claimed by the Greeks, but rather the only truly pious person (θεοσεβής).² Clement concludes book seven of the *Stromateis* by claiming that he has accomplished the task announced in the preface to book six.³ And he adds to this conclusion that his work, unlike those of the Greeks, is not characterized by stylistic elegance, rhetorical skill, or even clarity of exposition. This, however, does not mean that his work is lacking in substance and argument, he claims.⁴ Rather, Clement says, his work is written in such a way as to invite its reader to unveil its treasures, and he counts on the reader's resourcefulness and industry for that.⁵

¹ I use the edition of Alain Le Boulluec of *Stromateis* VII, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Les Stromates, Stromate VII*, Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par A. Le Boulluec (SC 428; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997). For the rest of the *Stromateis* I use the edition of Otto Stählin, Ludwig Früchtel and Ursula Treu: *Clemens Alexandrinus II, Stromata Buch I–VI* (GCS 52; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985⁴) and *Clemens Alexandrinus III, Stromata Buch VII–VIII, Excerpta ex Theodoto, Eclogae Propheticae, Quis dives salvetur, Fragmente* (GCS 17; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970²).

² On the concept of gnosis and the figure of the gnostic in Clement, see the monograph of Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952), and the remarks of Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 170–174, and Raoul Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 126–149.

³ *Strom.* VII 110, 4.

⁴ *Strom.* VII 111, 1–3.

⁵ *Strom.* VII 111, 3: Οὐτ' οὖν τῆς τάξεως οὔτε τῆς φράσεως στοχάζονται οἱ Στρωματεῖς, ὅπου γε ἐπίτηδες καὶ τὴν λέξιν οὐχ ἑλλήγες εἶναι βούλονται καὶ τὴν δογμάτων ἐγκατασποράν λεληθότως καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν πεποιήνται, φιλοπόνους καὶ εὐρετικούς εἶναι τοὺς ἀναγιγνώσκοντας εἴ τινες τύχοιεν παρασκευάζοντες.

The modern reader must take this statement of Clement into account when studying the *Stromateis*, especially book seven. Clement's statement implies that the reader should work out the possible connections lurking in the text, and in this way one should arrive at the doctrines which are scattered through this work (τῶν δογμάτων ἐγκατασποράν). The ancient reader was often required to follow such a route.⁶ One important connection for the reader to work out in *Stromateis* VII is how the overall purpose of this book is realized in the individual sections, since these vary considerably in terms of their themes and, what is more, as is often the case in the *Stromateis*, they are rather loosely connected. This is one of the major challenges that the interpreter of *Stromateis* VII 22–34 will face, which make up a section devoted to superstition, as it is not entirely clear how this section fits in with the overall purpose of this book. In what follows I take up this question.⁷

2. THE PURPOSE OF CLEMENT'S TREATMENT OF SUPERSTITION

In *Strom.* VII 22, which marks the beginning of the section on superstition, Clement claims that the Greeks conceive of the gods as anthropomorphic (ἄνθρωπόμορφους) and liable to human affections (ἄνθρωποπαθεῖς), and he appeals to Xenophanes' criticism of similar religious views to corroborate his point.⁸ Early Christians used to appeal to Xenophanes' criticism of the anthropomorphic conception of God and to appropriate his account of an intelligible God because they considered it a confirmation of the irrationality of pagan religion and the rationality of the Christian conception of God.⁹ Clement's critical point, however, comes as a contrast to the conclusion of the immediately preceding section, according to which the *logos* illuminates everything in the world and every action in man's life (*Strom.* VII 21, 7).

⁶ Ancient Platonists often point out the difficulty of Plato's dialogues (see e.g. Plutarch, *De Iside* 370e–f). On the intended audience and the structure of the *Stromateis*, see Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses. The Dependence Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteborg: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 29–50, 132–139.

⁷ The reader of this section of the *Stromateis* will profit from the notes of Le Boulluec in the edition mentioned in note 1, and the article by Tatjana Alekniene, "La piété véritable: de l'*Euthyphron* de Platon à la piété gnostique dans le livre VII des *Stromates* de Clément d'Alexandrie," *VChr* 60 (2006) 447–460.

⁸ *Strom.* VII 22, 1; Xenophanes, fr. B 16 Diels-Kranz.

⁹ See, for instance, the definition of God that Irenaeus gives in *Adv. haer.* III 8, 3 and IV 11, 2, which is a silent borrowing of Xenophanes' definition of God (B 24 D–K). On this see further Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: University Press, 2001), 332–334.

Apparently the idea that connects the two sections is that the Greeks ignore the testimony of the *logos*, since they stick with false conceptions of God.

This idea is common in early Christian thinkers.¹⁰ In the new section on superstition, Clement moves to contrast the Greeks with the Christian gnostic, whom he considers as innocent of any superstition (ἀδεισιδαίμων) and hence as truly pious.¹¹ One would expect that Clement would make the contrast in terms of illumination by the *logos*, distinguishing between the unilluminated Greeks and the illuminated Christian gnostics. However, the contrast that Clement proceeds to draw is between men of vice (μοχθηροί) who have false views about God and necessarily so, that is, the Greeks, and men of virtue (σπουδαίοι) who have the right knowledge about God, namely that God is noble, beneficent, principle of all goods and the cause of no evils.¹² The latter are the Christian gnostics.

The terms in which Clement contrasts the two groups are interesting in several regards. To begin with, the way Clement makes this contrast shows that he does not actually contrast superstitious with non-superstitious beliefs in the way we use the term 'superstition' today. Rather, the contrast is between false and true conceptions of God, and by implication, between false and true religious beliefs, that is, between false and true knowledge about God. To understand this better it is crucial to distinguish two senses in which the terms δεισιδαίμων/ἀδεισιδαίμων are used in this section of Clement's *Stromateis*, a narrow and a wider one. In the narrow sense the terms mean 'godfearing/not godfearing' while in the wider sense they mean 'the person with false/true conception of God.' The two senses are closely linked, Clement suggests, since the person who is fearful of God is the one who has wrong beliefs about God. The person who fears God does so because he takes God to be potentially harmful, vengeful, or bad, while, Clement claims, God is essentially benevolent, beneficent, good, and the principle of all goods. If this is so, it is the wrong beliefs about God which cause superstition in the sense of godfearfulness, rather than the other way around. And to the extent that these beliefs are evidence of ignorance or false knowledge, the superstitious person is ignorant of what God truly is. I take this sense to be, more precisely, the wider sense of the term δεισιδαίμων.

¹⁰ See for instance, Justin, 1 *Apol.* 21, 2–6, Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 4, 18–19, Theophilus, *Ad Autolyicum* I g; II 2–7.

¹¹ *Strom.* VII 22, 2: ὁ τῷ ὄντι βασιλικὸς τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ γνωστικὸς οὗτος καὶ θεοσεβὴς καὶ ἀδεισιδαίμων [ὢν], τίμιον, σεμνόν, μεγαλοπρεπῆ, εὐποιοητικόν, εὐεργετικόν, ἀπάντων ἀρχηγὸν ἀγαθῶν, κακῶν δὲ ἀναίτιον μόνον εἶναι τὸν μόνον θεὸν πεπεισμένος.

¹² *Strom.* VII 22, 2.

Clement uses the terms δεισιδαίμων/ἄδεισιδαίμων in both the narrow and the wider sense, but it is the latter which he prefers as more meaningful. Such a use of the terms is common in early Christians.¹³ There is also a background of similar use in the earlier philosophical tradition. This goes back at least to Theophrastus, who wrote a work with the title *On Piety*, from which we have only fragments today.¹⁴ On the basis of the existing evidence, Theophrastus appears to be the first to use the term δεισιδαιμονία and its derivatives in the sense of 'godfearfulness' with a negative connotation.¹⁵ Earlier the term was used to signify the virtue of 'the veneration of gods.'¹⁶ Later the Epicureans systematically used the term δεισιδαιμονία and its cognates negatively in order to criticize a certain conception of gods as the source of godfearfulness. Such a use occurs in the work of the Epicurean Philodemus *On Piety*, which is recovered from the papyri in Herculaneum.¹⁷ We find a similar use of this terminology also in Plutarch's *On Superstition* and later in Porphyry's *On Abstinence* (esp. II 60, 1–2).¹⁸ This use of the terms is crucial for the case Clement tries to make in the section on superstition of *Stromateis* VII. Let me outline in detail what this case is.

Clement argues that the people he accuses of superstition, namely the Greeks, are not superstitious merely in the sense of fearing God unnecessarily, but also in the sense that they have beliefs about God which amount to a denial of the existence of God. Superstitious people, Clement claims, model God on the worst human characteristics (*Strom.* VII 23, 1) that they themselves have (*Strom.* VII 22, 2). But such a conception of God, Clement maintains, is so alien to what God actually is, that those who share it should rightly be classified as atheists. The fact that they admit the existence of God does not amount to much according to Clement, since the idea of God that they have does not correspond to reality, namely to what God really is. Superstitious people, then, believe in something that is not. And by doing so, they practically deny what really is, God as rightly conceived. It is in this sense that such people, namely the Greeks, are atheists.

¹³ Justin, 1 *Apol.* 2, 3; Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 22, 10; Origen, *Cels.* III 79; IV 5.

¹⁴ The fragments of Theophrastus' *On Piety* have been collected by Walter Pötscher, *Theophrastus Peri Eusebeias* (Philosophia Antiqua 11; Leiden: Brill, 1964). His edition has been criticized by Pamela Huby, *Classical Review* 23 (1973) 52–54. A better edition is that of William F. Fortenbaugh, *Quellen zur Ethik Theophrasts* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1984), 54–65 (text), 262–274 (commentary).

¹⁵ Also in his *Characters*, character 16 is that of δεισιδαίμων.

¹⁶ See Xenophon, *Cyr.* III 3, 58; *Ages.* 11, 8.

¹⁷ See Dirk Obbink, *Philodemus On Piety* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

¹⁸ See below, 121 f.

This is the thrust of Clement's argument, which I will discuss in the next section. Before I go into it, however, let me draw attention to a remarkable feature that occurs at the beginning of Clement's account of superstition. This is his admission that he had already dealt with the subject in the *Protrepticus*.¹⁹ Indeed, Clement did so in quite some detail. He devotes a long section to the topic of superstition and the conception of God, more generally, in his *Protrepticus* (paragraphs 11–37). One wonders, then, what the need is for Clement to go into this topic again in the *Stromateis*. His own answer is that he does so because he wants to respond to the Greek challenge that the Christians are atheists, by showing who actually qualifies as such (*Strom.* VII 23). But one can still wonder what would be the need for this, since this was carried out in the *Protrepticus*, a work that specifically addresses the Greeks, the authors of this challenge.

A close reading of the relevant section in *Stromateis* VII suggests that Clement goes into this subject again because he finds it crucial for his project of expounding the profile of the Christian gnostic, which, as has been said, is part of the 'ethical discourse' of *Stromateis* VI–VII. We will understand this better if we gain a clearer vision of what Clement aims to do in this 'ethical discourse.'

As already mentioned, Clement presumes that one's beliefs about the divine are tightly connected with one's character. The correct beliefs about the divine, Clement argues, lead to the best possible character, which is that of the gnostic, who is characterized by purity of soul and justice (e.g. *Strom.* VII 29). Clement talks about the virtuous character of the gnostic in detail in *Stromateis* VI.²⁰ In the section VII 22–34 of *Stromateis* VII Clement wants to explore a specific aspect of that, namely the ethical dimension of the correct beliefs about the divine. This is why he goes into the subject of superstition once again, despite his earlier detailed account in the *Protrepticus*. For while in the *Protrepticus* the focus was on the superstition of the Greeks, and in *Stromateis* VI the virtue of the gnostic, in *Stromateis* VII Clement intends to discuss how virtue and correct knowledge of the divine are closely related.

Now, the way this relationship works is not always the same. Sometimes Clement appears to suggest that the gnostic is distinguished by his justice and purity of soul as a consequence of his correct beliefs about the divine (*Strom.* VII 31, 8; VII 36, 2–4), but elsewhere it seems to be the other way round (*ibid.* VII 22, 2; VII 29). This, however, is not much of a problem.

¹⁹ *Strom.* VII 22, 3.

²⁰ See esp. *Strom.* VI 82–114.

Rather, it is characteristic of the profile of the gnostic, as Clement draws it in the *Stromateis*, according to which virtue and knowledge are identical, and both are evidence of illumination by the *logos*.

This connection between virtue and knowledge is famously an ancient one. It is emblematic in Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, although they speak of different forms of knowledge. The connection between religious beliefs and ethics is also well established in the philosophical tradition long before Clement. Plato explores the connection between religious beliefs and ethical attitude especially in the *Laws*.²¹ Plato presents us there with an argument according to which no believer in the gods commits an unjust deed willingly. The underlying reason for such a deed, it is suggested, must be some mistaken view about the gods. Plato lists three possibilities here: either one does not admit the existence of the gods at all, or one believes that the gods are indifferent, or one believes that the gods can be won over with prayers and sacrifices.²² Any of these beliefs, it is suggested, can account for a wrong action, that is, an action which goes against the divine law.

The connection between having the right beliefs about the gods and having the right ethical profile becomes more nuanced if we consider that piety, which consists in venerating the divine, was regarded as a virtue in antiquity. True piety, however, involves having the right beliefs about God. This is highlighted in Plato's *Euthyphro*. The lack of knowledge about the gods that Euthyphro displays, suggests that his piety is also false, and as a result, he is not as virtuous as he thinks.²³ And in the *Epinomis* we are told that piety is the most important virtue that man can have, and is one that involves knowledge of God, of course.²⁴

The connection between the right beliefs about God and true piety becomes prominent also later, in the debate between the Academics, Stoics,

²¹ On the ethics of Plato's *Laws*, see Christopher Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 89–126.

²² *Laws* 885b: "No man who believes in the gods as the law would have him believe has ever done of his own free will an unjust deed or let slip lawless discourse. If a man acts like this, it is from one of three causes. Either, as I say, he does not believe, or again, he believes that they are gods but are indifferent to mankind, or lastly that they are easily to be won over by the cajoling of offerings and prayers." (Θεοὺς ἡγούμενος εἶναι κατὰ νόμους οὐδεὶς πώποτε οὔτε ἔργον ἀσεβὲς ἡργάσατο ἐκὼν οὔτε λόγον ἀφήκεν ἄνομον, ἀλλὰ ἐν δὴ τι τῶν τριῶν πάσχω, ἢ τοῦτο, ὅπερ εἶπον, οὐχ ἡγούμενος, ἢ τὸ δεύτερον ὄντας οὐ φροντίζειν ἀνθρώπων, ἢ τρίτον εὐπαραμυθήτους εἶναι θυσίαις τε καὶ εὐχαῖς παραγενομένους).

²³ See Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 157–178.

²⁴ *Epin.* 989b: μεῖζον μὲν γὰρ ἀρετῆς μηδεὶς ἡμᾶς ποτε πείσῃ τῆς εὐσεβείας εἶναι τῷ θνητῷ γένει. The author of *Epinomis* builds on the argument of the *Laws* (e.g. 888b–892d).

and Epicureans. Epicurus and the Epicureans were accused of atheism,²⁵ despite the fact that Epicurus explicitly speaks of the gods in his works.²⁶ His critics, however, apparently maintained that the mere acknowledgement of the gods is not sufficient to dispel the charge of atheism. The Academic Cotta in Cicero's *De natura deorum* invokes Posidonius who argues that Epicurus' belief in anthropomorphic gods with human needs amounts to denying (*tollere/ἀναιρεῖν*) their existence.²⁷ For Posidonius and Cotta the failure to preserve a conception of the gods that does justice to them effectively abolishes them. This is what Clement claims with regard to the Greeks.

Lucretius, in his *De rerum natura*, and especially Philodemus, in his work *On Piety*, respond to this criticism of atheism.²⁸ Philodemus shares with the critics of Epicurus the view that true piety involves getting rid of false beliefs about the divine. Of course Philodemus does not agree with the critics of Epicurus regarding which beliefs count as false. The beliefs that the Epicureans reject, he argues, are specifically responsible for godfearfulness. Philodemus, however, appears to agree with the critics of Epicurus that false beliefs about the gods are not only at odds with true piety but also undermine one's virtue more generally.²⁹ It is part of Philodemus' overall defence of Epicureanism to devote a large section of his *On Piety*

²⁵ See, for instance, Cicero, *De natura deorum* I 121–124. I cite part of the text below in footnote 27. On this issue, see Dirk Obbink, "The Atheism of Epicurus," *GRBS* 30 (1989) 187–223.

²⁶ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 123.

²⁷ Cicero, *De natura deorum* I 123; Posidonius, fr. 22a Edelstein-Kidd (Rackham trans. modified): "It is doubtless therefore truer to say, as our good friend Posidonius argued in the fifth book of his *On the Nature of the Gods*, that Epicurus does not really believe in the gods at all, and that he said what he did about the immortal gods only for the sake of deprecating popular odium. Indeed, he could not have been so senseless as really to imagine God to be like a feeble human being, but resembling him only in outline and surface, not in solid substance, and possessing all man's limbs but entirely incapable of using them, an emaciated and transparent being, showing no kindness or beneficence to anybody, caring for nothing and doing nothing at all. In the first place, a being of this nature is an absolute impossibility, and Epicurus was aware of this, and so actually abolishes the gods, although professedly retaining them." (Verius est igitur nimirum illud, quod familiaris omnium nostrum Posidonius disseruit in libro quinto de natura deorum, nullos esse deos Epicuro videri, quaeque is de deis immortalibus dixerit, invidiae detestandae gratia dixisse; neque enim tam desipiens fuisset, ut homunculi similem deum fingeret, liniamentis dumtaxat extremis, non habitu solido, membris hominis praeditum omnibus usu membrorum ne minimo quidem, exilem quondam atque perlucidum, nihil cuiquam tribuentem nihil gratificantem, omnino nihil curantem nihil agentem. Quae natura primum nulla esse potest, idque videns Epicurus re tollit, oratione relinquit deos.)

²⁸ Lucretius, *De rerum natura* I 80–101; Philodemus, *On Piety* col. 26–48 Obbink.

²⁹ Philodemus, *On Piety* col. 85–86 Obbink.

(i.e. cols. 60–86 Obbink) to arguing that the formation of false beliefs about the gods plays an important role in the rise of injustice, which is something that, of course, the Epicureans utterly reject.³⁰ Philodemus maintains that one's actions are guided, or inspired, to a large extent by what one believes about the gods. If one thinks, for instance, that God is unjust, malevolent, or the source of evils, one would justify one's own unjust deeds. If, however, one believes that God is good and the source of goodness, one would be motivated to act virtuously. Philodemus not only tries to refute the charge of atheism that was imposed on the Epicureans, but he also sets out to apply it to other philosophers and the critics themselves, and he does so by accusing them of violating the correct ethical standards. The crucial point for us here is that Philodemus takes this violation as a proof of mistaken theological beliefs.

A close connection between theological beliefs and ethical standards is also to be found in Plutarch. In his short work *On Superstition*, Plutarch distinguishes two kinds of mistaken attitudes to the divine, namely atheism and superstition. The atheist believes that the gods do not exist, while he who is superstitious believes that the gods exist but are such as to be feared. The atheist is incapable of conceiving God, as he is incapable of conceiving goodness, which, for a Platonist like Plutarch, is identical with God.³¹ The superstitious person instead believes, Plutarch suggests, that God, who is good, is evil.³² In his view both cases ultimately qualify as atheism, since both types of belief amount to a denial of what is actually the case, namely the existence of a God who is essentially good. Each case of confusion, Plutarch further suggests, reflects a specific kind of human

³⁰ Philodemus, *On Piety* col. 71 Obbink (trans. Obbink): "They will suppose that the gods are terrifying tyrants, and most of all because of their own bad consciences they will expect great misfortunes from them. Thus, as far as we are concerned, on account of the belief which they do not have, they would accomplish nothing. But those who believe our oracles about the gods will first wish to imitate their blessedness in so far as mortals can ..." (δεινούς ὑπολήψονται τυράννους. καὶ μάλιστα αὐτοὶ δι' ἃ συνοῖδασιν αὐτοῖς μεγάλας ἐξ αὐτῶν συμφορὰς προσδοκῆσουσιν. οὕτω δὲ τό γ' ἐφ' ἡμᾶς εἶναι δι' ἣν οὐκ ἐσχέκασιν πιστῖν οὐδὲν ἂν πράττειεν. οἱ δὲ πεισ[θέν]τες οἷς ἐχρησάμεν περὶ θεῶν πρῶτον μὲν ὥς θνητοὶ μιμε[ίσ]θαι τὴν ἐκείνων εὐδαιμονίαν θελήσουσιν ...) Cf. also *On Piety* col. 77 Obbink.

³¹ Plutarch identified the demiurge of the *Timaeus* and the Form of the Good in the *Republic*. See my article on Plutarch in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Theology section.

³² Plutarch, *On Superstition* 167e: "Atheism is altogether an indifference towards the divine, having no notion of the good, while superstition is a multitude of differing feelings with an underlying notion that the good is evil." (καὶ ὅλως ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης ἀπάθεια πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἐστὶ μὴ νοοῦσα τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἡ δὲ δεισιδαιμονία πολυπάθεια κακὸν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὑπονόουσα.)

character. Atheism is maintained by hardened characters, superstition by softer ones.³³ Compared with Philodemus, Plutarch argues for a reverse direction of causality between religious beliefs and the formation of character; in his view, it is a certain character that leads to specific beliefs about the gods, rather than the other way round.

A strong link between the conception of the gods and ethical behaviour is also maintained by Porphyry in his *On Abstinence from Eating Animals*. In this work, which is the longest surviving of his (four books), Porphyry draws on Theophrastus' work *On Piety*. Porphyry invokes Theophrastus especially in books two and three, where he defends vegetarianism on ethical grounds, invoking in particular piety and justice. In book two Porphyry gives several excerpts from Theophrastus' work and in book three he presents us with an interesting report of Theophrastus' view concerning the natural relationship between men and animals (*On Abst.* III 25).³⁴ Porphyry draws on Theophrastus because he shares his aims, which were to identify what the best way of honouring the gods in order to oppose mistaken conceptions of piety, such as the view that piety consists in sacrifices of animals to the gods.³⁵ Porphyry, following Theophrastus, argues that animal sacrifice is a perversion of authentic Greek piety.³⁶ Such a view of piety, Porphyry suggests, encourages unjust actions in the belief that the gods can be cajoled with sacrifices (cf. *Laws* 888c).³⁷ For Porphyry the correct conception of God

³³ Plutarch, *On Superstition* 164e–f.

³⁴ For a reconstruction of Theophrastus' view, see Fortenbaugh, "Theophrastus: Piety, Justice and Animals," in his *Theophrastean Studies* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003), 173–192.

³⁵ See Dirk Obbink, "The Origin of Greek Sacrifice: Theophrastus on Religion and Cultural History," in W. Fortenbaugh and R. Sharples (eds.), *Theophrastean Studies. On Natural Studies, Physics and Metaphysics, Ethics, Religion and Rhetoric* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1988), 272–295.

³⁶ *On Abstinence* II 5, 3–6, 4.

³⁷ Porphyry, *On Abstinence* II 60, 3–4: "And if a young man thinks that the gods take pleasure in extravagant offers and, as it is often said, on the sacrifices of oxen and other kinds of animals, how would he show temperance of his own will? If he believes that it is pleasing to the gods to sacrifice, how, then, he would resist committing injustice, since he believes that he would pay for his mistake through sacrifices? And if he is convinced that the gods do not need these offers, but they rather care about the character of those who come to them, and consider the most valuable sacrifice to be the right opinion about them and about the things in reality, how then would he not become temperate, pious, and just?" ("Όταν δὲ νέος θεοὺς χαίρειν πολυτελείας γνῶ καὶ, ὥς φασιν, ταῖς τῶν βοῶν καὶ ἄλλων ζώων θοίναις, πότε' ἂν ἐκὼν σωφρονήσῃεν; Πῶς δὲ κεχαρισμένα θύειν ἡγούμενος τοῖς θεοῖς ταῦτα οὐκ ἐξεῖναι ἀδικεῖν οἴησεται αὐτῷ μέλλοντι διὰ τῶν θυσιῶν ἐξωνεῖσθαι τὴν ἀμαρτίαν; Πεισθεὶς δὲ ὅτι τούτων χρεῖαν οὐκ ἔχουσιν οἱ θεοὶ, εἰς δὲ τὸ ἥθος ἀποβλέπουσι τῶν προσιόντων, μεγίστην θυσίαν λαμβάνοντες τὴν ὀρθὴν περὶ αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων διάληψιν, πῶς οὐ σώφρων καὶ ὅσιος καὶ δίκαιος ἔσται;)

is crucial for understanding what man's final end in life is. Porphyry joins a line of Platonists, such as Eudorus and Plutarch, who are inspired by Plato's *Theaetetus* 176b but also by the *Phaedo* and the *Timaeus*, in maintaining that man's final end is to assimilate himself to God.³⁸ For these Platonists, the right conception about God is clearly essential for understanding man's final end. They actually focus so much on dialogues such as the *Timaeus*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Parmenides* because they believe that one cannot shape one's character unless one acquires some understanding of the intelligible realm, which is the realm of the divine substances.³⁹

The examples of Philodemus, Plutarch, and of Porphyry, to the extent that he draws on earlier tradition, show that there was an established tendency in ancient philosophy to connect one's beliefs about God with one's character and with one's ethical beliefs. This tendency seems to comprise two components, first, the idea that one qualifies as an atheist if one has false beliefs about the gods, and second, the idea that such false beliefs destroy, or seriously undermine true piety and virtue more generally. It is this tendency, I suggest, that Clement exploits when he argues that the Greeks are practically atheists because of their false theological beliefs and that this has a shaping effect on their character. By the same token the Christian gnostic is presented as the most just as a result of his right theological beliefs; for he knows that justice is the best way of honouring God, given that God is goodness and justice. Let me now proceed to Clement's arguments for establishing the above conclusion.

³⁸ See George Karamanolis, "Transformations of Plato's ethics. Platonist interpretations of Plato's ethics from Antiochus to Porphyry," *Rhizai* 1 (2004) 73–105. Consider the following passages of Porphyry: "And you will honour your god best if you assimilate your thinking to his. This assimilation takes place only through virtue. For only virtue can drag the soul upwards and towards what is akin to it" (*Letter to Marcella* 16: καὶ τιμήσεις μὲν ἄριστα τὸν θεόν, ὅταν τῷ θεῷ τὴν σαυτῆς διάνοιαν ὁμοιώσης. Ἡ δὲ ὁμοίωσις ἔσται διὰ μόνης ἀρετῆς. μόνη γὰρ ἀρετὴ τὴν ψυχὴν ἄνω ἔλκει καὶ πρὸς τὸ συγγενές). Porphyry himself explains what this end amounts to in the following passage: "For the gods the best offer is a pure intellect and a soul which resists strong emotions. It is also appropriate to offer other things in moderation too, and not with indifference but with enthusiasm" (*On Abstinence* II 61, 1: Θεοῖς δὲ ἀρίστη μὲν ἀπαρχὴ νοῦς καθαρὸς καὶ ψυχὴ ἀπαθής, οἰκεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μετρίως μὲν ἀπάρχεσθαι τῶν ἄλλων, μὴ παρέργως δέ, ἀλλὰ σὺν πάσῃ προθυμίᾳ).

³⁹ An interesting discussion of the ethical implications of the *Timaeus* in particular is presented by Gábor Betegh, "Cosmological Ethics in the *Timaeus* and Early Stoicism," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 24 (2003) 273–302.

3. CLEMENT'S ARGUMENTS ABOUT SUPERSTITION

Clement starts his account by castigating the tendency of the Greeks to represent the gods in anthropomorphic form, in particular to impose on them some of the worst human vices, such as irascibility. This is a charge similar to that levelled against the Epicureans. Clement argues that the Greeks see everywhere signs of what they assume to be evidence of divine anger, because they have a certain conception of the divine (*Strom.* VII 24, 1). But this conception presents a logical impossibility. Clement presents the following dilemma here: either the gods become angry with men because they feel offended by their conduct, which would mean that the gods fare worse than humans themselves, or they react angrily without reason, which is what the worst of humans do; in either case this conduct is entirely inappropriate for the divine, since a god is not affected, let alone offended or damaged by anything (*Strom.* VII 23, 2). The upshot is that the gods that the Greeks have in mind cannot possibly exist and in this sense the Greeks qualify as atheists.

Clement's argument is more complex than that. Clement does not talk about how the Greeks represent the divine, as his verb *παραστῆσαι* might initially suggest (*Strom.* VII 23, 1), but rather about how they conceive of it. That is, Clement is talking here about what we would call conceptualization. But there is something more than that. Clement appears to suggest that we are not dealing merely with a certain conception of the divine, which is, after all, only one aspect of reality, but rather with a certain conception of reality as a whole. More specifically, the problem with the Greeks, Clement suggests, is that they place the wrong interpretation on what happens around us in everyday life. They mistake events for divine signs, such as signs of divine anger, and their misguided interpretation shapes their behaviour and their acts accordingly. What we are dealing with here, then, is not merely a mistaken conception of the divine, but a seriously distorted conception of reality, physical and ethical, because, Clement argues, the Greeks do not really understand that what is dear to God is justice and what is repulsive is injustice and badness (*Strom.* VII 26, 2). As a result, Clement claims, the Greeks become engaged in false purificatory practices. These, however, Clement suggests, are false in the sense that they do not purify their agent from anything, because what is really repulsive to God, namely injustice, cannot be purified through such practices.

Clement supports his point about the illusory purificatory practices of the Greeks by adducing evidence from ancient literature, which focuses on this theme in various tones. Plato, Philodemus, Plutarch, and, later on,

Porphry also appeal to Greek literature for similar purposes in the works I mentioned earlier. Clement makes use of the evidence from ancient literature,⁴⁰ because on the one hand it shows that what he castigates is not his own fabrication but something well known, and because on the other hand this evidence is as critical as Clement himself. In the same reservoir of evidence Clement also finds support for what he takes to be the right or true kind of purification, namely the purification of the mind and the body (*Strom.* VII 27, 5–6).

At this point one may come to wonder to what extent the picture that Clement draws of the Greeks, their conception of the divine, and their religious practices, such as the purifications that he mentions, is credible and how much of this is a construction dictated by his apologetic zeal. And if the latter is the case, how seriously should we take him.

Two things can be said on this matter. First, Clement might well exaggerate in order to draw a grotesque picture of the Greeks, so as to make a better contrast with the picture he wants to draw of the gnostic. This is largely true and already an ancient practice. In Cicero's *De natura deorum*, Cotta admits that we should not take it literally that Epicurus conceived of the gods as anthropomorphic but only in some refined sense, yet, he claims, even this sense of anthropomorphic gods is an impossibility, which eventually suggests that Epicurus was an atheist and was trying to hide this fact for fear of popular reaction. The point of Clement's argument seems to be similar. It is not so important whether the Greeks conceive of the divine exactly in the way that Clement presents. The important thing is that what the Greeks appear to believe about the gods makes very little sense and it is barely defensible in whatever light one should look at it. Clement exaggerates the absurdity of their position, but this would not change even if one drew the picture more carefully; as long as the Greeks believe in something which is utopian, unreal, or nonsensical about the divine, they qualify as atheists.

Secondly, Clement's argument against the anthropomorphic conception of the gods, as being pleased with sacrifices and purifications, is well known in antiquity. The idea that piety amounts to offering sacrifices to the gods had already been rejected in Plato's *Euthyphro* as an idea that contains little understanding of the gods and of piety. A more focused discussion on the topic is offered by Theophrastus in his *On Piety* and in Porphyry's *On Abstinence*. Both works maintain that animal sacrifice must be avoided

⁴⁰ Clement cites the writers of comedies, such as Diphilus, Philemon, and Menander, but also Homer and Antiphon.

because there is a strong kinship between the souls of animals and the souls of men, since both have a share in reason.⁴¹ Porphyry himself has a further polemical purpose to serve, namely to oppose the Stoic conception of the divine and to defend the Platonic-Pythagorean conception of God. Clement too has a similar twofold purpose, that is, to oppose the Greek allegations against the Christian conception of the divine and to demonstrate what the right conception of God is, namely the Christian conception that is endorsed by the gnostic.

Clement's criticism of the Greek conception of the divine becomes particularly strong because it contains the suggestion that such a conception betrays an altogether mistaken perception of reality. As I have mentioned above, Clement justifies this criticism by claiming that the Greeks take as signs of God's existence all kinds of features of reality which in fact do not reveal anything about the divine. But this is an Epicurean argument. The Epicureans argued that the mistaken conception of the divine that people have, suggests an altogether mistaken understanding of reality, as they take, for instance, ordinary natural phenomena to be signs of divine anger.⁴² Such a critical perspective may have already been maintained by Theophrastus. Porphyry, who draws on Theophrastus, comes close to this idea. Porphyry argues that a much more appropriate way to honour the gods is to have the right belief about them and also about reality as a whole, rather than to engage in any religious ritual such as a sacrifice.⁴³ Clement's criticism of the Greeks is no more exaggerated than those of his ancient models.

One might object here that Clement's profile of the Christian gnostic as one who has the right conception of God and of reality as a whole (*Strom.* VII 29, 5) sounds too flattering. Once again Clement follows ancient practices. It was a characteristic of an educated person in antiquity to have the right beliefs about what could be known and to suspend judgement about those things that are beyond one's grasp. Stoics and Epicureans spoke of a certain conception of things that all people share, the *koinai ennoiai* or the *prolepseis*.⁴⁴ Of course, people may share one such concept but still disagree about its content, having different conceptions of it. The

⁴¹ See Obbink, "The Origin of Greek Sacrifice," 283–285.

⁴² See, for instance, Lucretius, *De rerum natura* V 416–770.

⁴³ See above, note 37.

⁴⁴ On the Stoic *ennoiai* see the recent monograph of Henry Dyson, *Prolepsis and Ennoia in the Early Stoa* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2009). On the Epicurean *prolepseis* see Elizabeth Asmis, "Epicurean Epistemology," in K. Algra et. al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1991), 260–284.

formation of the right conception was the task of education in general and of philosophy in particular. The content of such *ennoiai*, especially of important ones, such as *eudaimonia*, virtue, the soul, God, etc., cannot reflect just personal preference, but rather must be a matter of hard thought and argument. A profoundly mistaken conception was taken to suggest either the influence of bad philosophy or ignorance of what the common concepts suggest, or both, namely a philosophy which ignores common notions. This is, for instance, what Plutarch sets out to show against the Stoics in his work *On Common Notions*.⁴⁵ It is this background belief about common notions that motivates philosophers in antiquity, such as Theophrastus, Epicurus, Posidonius, Philodemus, and also Clement, to castigate those who have a mistaken conception of the divine.

The correct method of getting at the correct conception of the divine is to see first what is suggested by the concept itself. God cannot have needs or affections, and cannot be wanting in some way, as humans are, because this goes against what the concept of the divine suggests. Most of his contemporaries would grant that. It is interesting to see that in his treatment of the superstition of the Greeks, Clement emphasizes especially this particular point, which most would be ready to admit. This is an ancient technique of polemics, which is employed by Plutarch in *On Common Notions* for instance. Another example is the criticism of the Epicurean concept of pleasure in Cicero's *De finibus*, where it is suggested that pleasure is not commonly understood as "lack of pain"; rather, this is an Epicurean invention which goes against what the notion itself commonly suggests.⁴⁶ It is part of this technique to barely go beyond what is almost obvious about the concepts in question.

This is also what Clement does. In the course of his treatment, it transpires that for Clement God is an intelligible being, intelligent, and identical with goodness. But who would contradict that? The Platonists and Peripatetics, the two main currents of philosophy in Clement's time, would grant it readily. The Stoics contended that God is material but they would agree with the rest. Even the Epicureans, despite their anthropomorphic conception of the gods, would admit that much. Sceptics like Sextus Empiricus would deny such a view of God, but they would oppose the truth of

⁴⁵ See now the edition with a commentary on Plutarch's work by Michel Casevitz and Daniel Babut, *Plutarque. "Oeuvres morales." Tome XV, 2e partie. Traité 72: Sur les notions communes, contre les stoïciens* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002).

⁴⁶ *De finibus* II 3–7.

any statement of a philosophical nature. It seems, then, that Clement operates with a minimal conceptual apparatus in his criticism of the Greeks' mistaken conception of the divine. And the filling with content of the gnostic's conception of the divine does not contradict this attitude either.

Let me now turn to another argument that Clement advances, which, to my mind, illustrates the point I have just made. Clement proceeds to the question of whether the divine can be located either in a temple or in works of art, such as statues (*Strom.* VII 28–29). Humans tend to think, Clement argues, that God exists in a place, that is, in a place they consider sacred in one way or another. But this would mean, Clement continues, that God does not exist unless he is localized, which does not make sense when said of God, because only what is non-being comes into existence by being localized (*Strom.* VII 28, 6). Clement's argument works only on the assumption that God is an intelligible being and, since such beings are not subject to change and corruption, they are the only ones that subsist. And in this sense intelligible beings are, strictly speaking, beings. Both the Platonists and Peripatetics of this age would agree that God is an intelligible substance and thus a substance (*ousia*) *par excellence*, whereas location is only a property of sensible beings that qualifies a substance, a point that Aristotle argues in *Categories* 4. If this view was widely held at Clement's time, the belief that he attributes to the Greeks appears again to be at odds with the concept of God as commonly conceived.

Clement's argument here shows affinities on the one hand with the argument made by contemporary Peripatetics and Platonists against the idea that the soul is located in the body, while on the other hand it reminds us of the debate in later Platonism about the theurgic dimension of the divine. Regarding the first, there was an interesting discussion going on during Clement's time between the Peripatetics and Platonists, but also doctors such as Galen, on whether the soul is located in the body or not. Alexander of Aphrodisias argued forcefully against the idea that the soul is in the body; he rather maintained that the soul permeates the whole body without being somewhere present in it.⁴⁷ This view of the omnipresence of the soul at (not in) the body is elaborated further by Plotinus with regard to both the human soul and the world-soul.⁴⁸ Similar views are also held with regard to the relation of God to the world. The author of *De mundo*, for instance, argues that God is not present in the world and yet permeates and

⁴⁷ Alexander, *De anima* 23, 24 f.; 63, 17–19.

⁴⁸ See Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 4, 13; 22–24, and also *Enn.* VI 4.

rules the world through a *dynamis* that stems from him.⁴⁹ Clement comes close to this idea when he says that God is not in one place and yet rules over the entire world (*Strom.* VII 28, 2). Such a view about the mode of existence of God would be considered philosophically adequate at this time.

As to the discussion regarding the theurgic dimension of the divine, this seems to go back to the Pythagoreans, who were still active in Clement's age.⁵⁰ Clement is critical of the Pythagoreans in *Stromateis* V, for instance, for their conception of the divine.⁵¹ The idea that Clement subjects to criticism is that the Pythagorean claim that the divine can be present in some place, object, or human being. It is this idea that is later developed by theurgists such as Iamblichus, and it becomes much more elaborate. Iamblichus maintains that the soul has to be prepared for its ascent to the divine through specific religious practices, such as prayer, sacrifice, and the ritual use of material objects, by means of which the soul is purified. Once in this state, the soul can ascend to, or be united with, the gods, Iamblichus suggests.⁵² This view of the divine and its role in man's happiness was strongly resisted by Porphyry, who considered it both at odds with the concept of the divine and as giving the wrong message about how man should attain happiness in life.⁵³

If the Pythagorean conception of the divine attracts Clement's critical notice, then his criticism of the superstition of the Greeks may not only refer to ancient religious practices motivated by the idea that the gods are anthropomorphic, but may also extend to the contemporary Greek practices of the Pythagoreans. Clement wants to show that the Greeks in general had never been in a position to conceptualize correctly what kind of being God is, that is, an intelligible being that cannot exist in a place. Clement appears to align himself here with a widespread philosophical belief of his age to the effect that intelligible beings are present only as causes of order and harmony, and this happens in different ways. God is present in man for instance, Clement suggests, as a certain kind of knowledge, which ren-

⁴⁹ *De mundo*, chapters 5–6, 396b23–34, 397b20–398a6.

⁵⁰ Numenius, who is much indebted to the Pythagorean tradition, is Clement's contemporary. See frs. 1a–c, 24.56–62 Des Places.

⁵¹ *Strom.* V 27–31.

⁵² Iamblichus, *On Mysteries* II 11, 96–97; V 26, 230–233; *In Phaedrum*, fr. 6 Dillon. On this matter, see briefly John Dillon, "Iamblichus of Chalcis," in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II, 36.2 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1987), 862–909, esp. 899–901.

⁵³ Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo*. Cf. *On Abstinence* II 49, 12.

ders him or her a certain kind of person. This is, Clement argues, how God exists in the mind of the Christian gnostic (*Strom.* VII 29). Clement contends that there is nothing comparable with the honour that this knowledge is to God (VII 29, 8). This is what the gnostic and the Christian church as a whole offers to God. And as in Plato's *Euthyphro*, this knowledge constitutes true virtue for Clement (VII 31, 7).⁵⁴

The question which emerged earlier as to whether Clement suggests that the correct conception or knowledge of the divine also entails knowledge of justice and purity of mind, or whether he takes these to be conditions for the development of the correct conception of God, is not addressed by Clement. If we go by the evidence of Plotinus and Porphyry, the ascent towards knowledge of the divine can bring virtue along with it, or it can be identical with virtue, but on the other hand some kind of virtue is prerequisite.⁵⁵ The fact that Clement does not take a position on this should not surprise us, given his polemical aim in this part of the *Stromateis*.

Another relevant problem is how this knowledge of God comes into being in the mind of the gnostic. Is there a correct conception of the divine which serves as a starting point for the gnostic in order to arrive at this perfected concept of the divine? Clement does not talk about this issue either. Yet something like a progressive ascent towards the knowledge of the divine is implied by Clement.⁵⁶ It needs to be stressed, however, that Clement says only what is necessary for his argument and avoids committing himself to views that do not bear on his argument and are controversial. Such a move would cause him to deviate from his polemical purpose, which is to show the superiority of the conception of God that the gnostic has to that of the Greeks.

4. CONCLUSION

The thrust of Clement's argument is that the Greeks do not conceptualize correctly what God is, while the Christian gnostic succeeds in that. Clement suggests that we can see how wrong the conception of the Greeks is, if we focus for a moment on the conception that the gnostic has. For the gnostic, God is an intelligible being which, like any other of this kind, can only

⁵⁴ See Alekniené, "La piété véritable."

⁵⁵ Plotinus, *Enn.* I 2, 3–5; Porphyry, *Sent.* 32; *Fr.* 274–275 Smith.

⁵⁶ See further Judith L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria," *J ECS* 9 (2001) 3–25.

be known and understood intellectually. And Clement implies that this is exactly how the gnostic comes to know God. This knowledge of God is the only way one can relate to God. Such knowledge has strong repercussions on one's mind and life. This view would be endorsed by Platonists and Peripatetics. The gnostic differs, though, from all the Greeks, the philosophers included, because he or she has the correct knowledge of what God really is, so Clement claims. Clement chooses to criticize the anthropomorphic conception of God, clearly because this is the one that is most vulnerable to criticism. And he does so with arguments drawn from the ancient debate on the divine, especially the arguments launched against, but also by, the Epicureans. Clement also argues against Greek philosophical conceptions of God (though less convincingly), pointing to the different mental constitution of the gnostic, which is the result of a specific knowledge of the divine. It is this knowledge, the intelligent fire about which Clement talks at the end of paragraph 34 of *Stromateis* VII, which is the best way of honouring the gods. It is in the light of this conclusion that Clement proceeds to the famous discussion on prayer in the following chapters. A prayer to God is not merely an offer, but an activity motivated by a certain kind of knowledge of God. In the light of this, it is easy to understand in what sense the gnostic honours God continually, as Clement argues at the beginning of the section on prayer that comes immediately after the section on superstition.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ This paper has profited much from the comments I received at the conference on *Stromateis* VII, especially those of Alain Le Boulluec, Annewies van den Hoek, and Matyáš Havrda. I am also grateful to M. Havrda for a set of detailed remarks and for raising *aporiai*. I am, of course, solely responsible for the final outcome.

SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD:
PRAYER AND KNOWLEDGE IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Henny Fiskå Hägg

The aim of this essay is to discuss the relationship between prayer and knowledge in Clement of Alexandria, especially focusing on the seventh book of the *Stromateis*. In the early church there were two main and often overlapping categories of prayer. First, and fundamentally, there was individual or 'personal' prayer, second, there was the communal, liturgical prayer. It is the personal prayer that is my concern here. While there has been much research done in the area of liturgical prayer, the same is not true for the topic of devotional or personal prayer. Columba Stewart recently noted in the *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*: "Although ubiquitous in early Christian life, today the personal prayer of early Christians is one of the least studied aspects of their experience"; moreover, "even the recent strong interest in early Christian asceticism has focused more on sexuality, diet, gender, and questions of authority than on the devotional practices of ascetic men and women."¹

The seventh book of the *Stromateis* sums up many of Clement's central ideas concerning the Christian's life in the world, his responsibilities and duties, towards his neighbour as well as God. At the same time book seven also deals extensively with the topic of prayer and has been called "the oldest Christian theological statement on this subject,"² "the first sustained Christian treatment of prayer,"³ as well as "the final account of his teaching."⁴ Though Clement also emphasizes the communal purpose of prayer and highly values the idea of Christians manifesting "the unity of faith," he gives particular attention to personal, even contemplative, or silent prayer. His

¹ Columba Stewart, "Prayer," in D.G. Hunter and S.A. Harvey (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 744f.

² Robert L. Simpson, *The Interpretation of Prayer in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 36.

³ L. Edward Phillips, "Prayer in the First Four Centuries A.D.," in R. Hammerling (ed.), *A History of Prayer. The First to the Fifteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 56.

⁴ Eric F. Osborn, "Philo and Clement: Quiet Conversion and Noetic Exegesis," *The Studia Philonia Annual* 10 (1998) 108–124.

concise definition is that “Prayer (εὐχή) is ... converse (ὁμιλία) with God.”⁵ In the same book (but also elsewhere in his writings), in addition to knowledge (γνώσις) and prayer (ὁμιλία), terms like contemplation (θεωρία and ἐποπτεία τοῦ θεοῦ), faith (πίστις), spiritual progress (προκοπή), deification (θεοποίησις), and love (ἀγάπη) are treated, being all relevant to Clement’s description of the Christian ‘gnostic’ (his term for the mature Christian). Some of these concepts will also be dealt with in my discussion.

Clement did not, as far as we know, write any separate treatise on the subject of prayer. From the ante-Nicene period, however, three treatises on prayer have come down to us, by Tertullian, Cyprian and Origen, all primarily concerned with expounding the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer (which Clement was not). The Latin treatises by Tertullian and Cyprian are clearly intended for a broad audience, being rather easily accessible. The surviving Greek specimen by Origen is like Clement’s account more sophisticated and obviously intended for the educated and philosophically inclined readers whom they both normally addressed.

Though Origen does not mention Clement in his treatise, he is clearly influenced by Clement’s work. The same influence is also noticeable in the *Chapters of Prayer* of Evagrius Ponticus (345–399) who in his *Oratio* 3 adapts Clement’s definition of prayer as “converse (ὁμιλία) with God,” writing: “Prayer is a converse (ὁμιλία) of the spirit with God.”⁶ Clement’s view of interior prayer as a mystical ascent to communion with God proved most influential in the course of later Christian, especially Eastern, spirituality.

1. CLEMENT’S CONCEPT OF PRAYER

Clement’s discussion of prayer is closely related to his description of the true gnostic, or perfect Christian, whose life is marked, not only by faith, knowledge and love, but also by being in a constant relationship with God: “For all his life is prayer (εὐχή) and converse (ὁμιλία) with God.”⁷ The fellowship with God in prayer seems primarily to be an inward, silent relation. I have therefore chosen to translate ὁμιλία with the somewhat old–

⁵ *Strom.* VII 39, 6.

⁶ Evagrius Ponticus, *Oratio* III. See also Luke Dysinger, *Psalmody and Prayer in the Writings of Evagrius Ponticus* (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 74.

⁷ *Strom.* VII 73, 3.

fashioned term 'converse' instead of 'conversation,' in order not to associate it with spoken communication only:⁸

Prayer (εὐχή), then, to speak somewhat boldly, is converse (ὁμιλία) with God. Even if we address him in a whisper, without opening our lips, or uttering a sound, still we cry to him in our heart. For God never ceases to listen to the inward converse (ἐνδιάθετος ὁμιλία) of the heart.⁹

In *Stromateis* VII Clement uses the terms ὁμιλία and προσομιλέω, except for one case, only in relation to prayer and communion with God (four times ὁμιλία, three times προσομιλέω).¹⁰ 'Ὁμιλία seems to be a dialogue between man and God that is of an existential nature, as well as an immediate and personal experience.

For Clement the spiritual and the logical are closely connected and man's *nous* or 'noetic' element includes more than logical content.¹¹ In prayer God does not need words, for he listens to the soul and the *nous*, because soul (ψυχή) hears soul and *nous* (νοῦς) hears *nous*:

How can God help hearing the soul and the *nous* by itself, seeing that soul already apprehends soul and *nous* apprehends *nous*? Therefore God has no need to learn various tongues, as human interpreters have, but understands at once the *nous* of all men ... It is permitted to man therefore to speed his prayer even without a voice (φωνή), if he only concentrates all his spiritual energy upon the inner voice of the mind (εἰς φωνὴν τὴν νοητὴν) by his undistracted (ἀπερίσπαστον) turning to God.¹²

The ideal of remaining continually in prayer, which might seem typically monastic to us today, is older than monasticism. It is a tradition that Clement and the first theologians traced back to Jesus and the apostles.

He [the gnostic] prays in every place (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ), not however publicly for all to see (οὐδὲ ἐμφανῶς τοῖς πολλοῖς); but in every sort of way his prayer ascends, whether he is walking or in company or at rest or reading or engaged in good works; and though it be only a thought in the secret chamber (ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ταμείῳ) of the heart, while he calls on the Father in groanings which cannot be uttered (ἀλαλήτοις στεναγμοῖς), yet the Father is close at hand, even before he has done speaking.¹³

⁸ 'Ὁμιλία is also translated 'communion' and 'fellowship.'

⁹ *Strom.* VII 39, 6. Translation of *Stromateis* VII is taken from Henry Chadwick (ed.), *Alexandrian Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954); with a few modifications.

¹⁰ 'Ὁμιλία: *Strom.* VII 39, 1 (twice); 42, 1; 73, 1; προσομιλέω: *Strom.* VII 13, 2; 13, 3 and 49, 1.

¹¹ Cf. Osborn, "Philo and Clement," 120.

¹² *Strom.* VII 43, 3–5.

¹³ *Strom.* VII 49, 6–7.

In this paragraph alone there are echoes of several New Testament texts relating to prayer:¹⁴ 1 Timothy 2:8 says: “I desire, then, that in every place (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) the men should pray”; in Matthew 6:5–6 we read: “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others (ὅπως φανώσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) ... But whenever you pray, go into your room (εἴσελθε εἰς τὸ ταμεῖόν σου) and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret,” and, lastly, in the letter to the Romans 8:26 Paul writes: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words (στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις).” Clement also refers on some occasions to Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 “pray without ceasing (ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε)” which he seems to have interpreted rather literally as was done also by the later monastic fathers.¹⁵

The word ἀδιαλείπτως, often translated ‘continuous’ or ‘uninterrupted,’ occurs in book seven in combination with other terms as well, for instance with contemplation (or vision): the gnostic “persists in uninterrupted contemplation (θεωρία).”¹⁶ In *Strom.* VII 35, 4 the gnostic Christian is described as one “who is always in the uninterrupted presence of God (ἀδιαλείπτως τῷ θεῷ) by means of his knowledge (γνώσεως) and his life (βίου) and his thankful spirit (εὐχαριστίας).” Clement also sees the Christian’s prayers as sacrifices to God that are expressed not only in silence, but by singing praises and hymns and reading Scriptures, day and night. By doing this “he joins the heavenly choir in an always-remembered, continuous (συνεχοῦς) contemplation.”¹⁷

To Clement, then, the practice of continuous prayer is not primarily associated with the communal life of the church. Because God is present everywhere he did not see a need to set aside special days or special times of the day for prayer, or to pray in specific places: “We praise him as we till the ground, we sing hymns as we sail the sea, we feel his inspiration in all we do.”¹⁸ Prayer is to be not merely an activity among others, but the activity of our entire existence, a dimension present in everything we do: “For his

¹⁴ The quotations from the New Testament are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version* (Oxford: University Press, 1995).

¹⁵ Gabriel Bunge, *Earthen Vessels: The Practice of Personal Prayer according to the Patristic Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 105.

¹⁶ *Strom.* VII 44, 7.

¹⁷ *Strom.* VII 49, 4.

¹⁸ *Strom.* VII 35, 6. See also VII 80, 3.

[the gnostic's] whole life is prayer (εὐχή) and converse (ὁμιλία) with God."¹⁹ It should constitute not so much something we *do* from time to time, but something that we *are* all the time.

Clement also describes the relationship between man and God in terms of friendship (φιλία), love (ἀγάπη), of being close to God (σύνεγγυς τοῦ θεοῦ),²⁰ or being united to God through prayer (δι' εὐχῆς συνεῖναι ... θεῷ).²¹ The Christian gnostic, moreover, is expected to teach less mature Christians the importance of living close to God, to become "a mediator to bring about a close union (συνάφειαν) and fellowship (κοινωνίαν) with God."²²

Clement no doubt participated in the life of the church and followed the liturgical practice of praying at specific hours during the day.²³ The practice of praying three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, or at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, was among the Fathers traced back to the apostles themselves, who in turn followed Jewish practice. Nevertheless, Clement's ideal and special vision was that of 'continual prayer.' Accordingly, he seems to distinguish between the ordinary Christian, those of a common faith (κοινῇ πίστεις), who may pray at fixed times, and the more mature Christian who will go beyond these required hours. True prayer is to Clement something surpassing the normal devotion of Christians: "Now, if someone assign definite hours for prayer—as for example the third, and sixth, and ninth—yet the gnostic prays throughout his whole life, endeavouring by prayer to have fellowship with God."²⁴ In modern times this type of prayer is often called 'contemplative prayer,' as in Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*: "Contemplative prayer is a deep and simplified spiritual activity in which the mind will rest in a unified and simple concentration upon God."²⁵ In the preface to his book Merton makes clear that though it may be read by anybody and might be found useful to many, it "is not intended for everybody. It is not intended for all religious people,"²⁶ indicating—in a way reminiscent of Clement—that not everybody is supposed to live a spiritual life like the one that is described in his book.

¹⁹ *Strom.* VII 73, 1.

²⁰ *Strom.* VII 40, 2.

²¹ *Strom.* VII 40, 3.

²² *Strom.* VII 52, 1.

²³ *Strom.* VII 40, 3.

²⁴ *Strom.* VII 40, 3.

²⁵ Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation* (Wheathamstead, Hertfordshire: Anthony Clarke Books, 1961).

²⁶ Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*, vi.

The gnostic Christian not only prays at all times, he also, Clement writes, prays differently than the simple believer; whereas the gnostic prays for spiritual gifts, the latter prays for material gifts: “The gnostic prays that contemplation may grow and abide with him, just as the common man (ὁ κοινὸς ἄνθρωπος) prays for a continuance of health.”²⁷ Furthermore, the gnostic does not pray “that he may have his good things attached to him like ornaments, but that he *may be himself* good.”²⁸

Clement’s idea that prayer is not primarily to ask things from God—what may be called petitionary prayer—but rather staying always in God’s presence, has received little attention in scholarly, especially Western, literature. Remarkably enough, it has sometimes even been criticized and rejected as foreign to the Christian Scriptures. Anthony Meredith, for example, comments on Clement’s description of continuous prayer in this way: “This rarified conception of prayer has little obvious similarity with the New Testament. Above all there is an absence of any invitation to petitionary prayer or to the sacraments.” Meredith does not even recognize the conception as Christian and would rather compare it with the “private intellectual contemplation outlined by Plato in the *Republic* and Aristotle in the tenth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.”²⁹ Rarified or not, there can be no doubt that Clement found in the New Testament many texts that inspired and helped formulate his own ideas of prayer, including that of personal, ‘continuous’ prayer.

2. LOGICAL ANALYSIS AND SPIRITUAL PIETY

Theological reflection and religious practice have traditionally been seen as two separate areas in the study or religion. It is often claimed that there is a difference between worshipping God and knowing God, and that theology is more scientific than worship and prayer. Whereas worship and prayer (religious practice) is carried out in the church’s service, theology (theological reflection) is carried out in academic fora.

This distinction—more common in Western than in Eastern theology—is unusual in the theology of the early Fathers. In them knowledge of God is gained, not only by logical reflection and from the biblical history, or

²⁷ *Strom.* VII 46, 4.

²⁸ *Strom.* VII 38, 4.

²⁹ Anthony Meredith, “Clement of Alexandria,” in Ch. Jones, G. Wainwright, and E. Yarnold (eds.), *The Study of Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 1986), 115.

by 'simple' faith only, but through both; liturgy, prayer, and worship were just as important as theological reflection. Here Christianity, according to Robert L. Wilken, introduced something new to intellectual life, namely that faith is the way that leads to the knowledge of God.³⁰ Instead of confining rationality and faith to different compartments and different areas of life, they were seen as complementary.

In Clement these two ways to the knowledge of God, through religious practice and theological reflection, are closely related. He seems to emphasize the mystical, supra-rational aspect in man's relationship with God more than had been common so far in the history of the church. In this he proved highly influential to the later, especially eastern, tradition.

Clement's emphasis on the mystical element, I would argue, must be seen in relation to his apophatic attitude to the divine. Man cannot know God as he is, since he is essentially unknown (ἄγνωστος) and he can only be known through the incarnate Christ. Clement therefore distinguished between the unknown Father and the revealed Logos, the *dynamis* of God: God remains unknown, but the Son, Logos, or *dynamis* has revealed him to men.³¹

In order to illustrate Clement's combination of the logical and supra-rational faculties, I will turn for a moment to the fifth book of the *Stromateis*, a book where Clement expands his views of the inadequacy of language to communicate truth. In the philosophical language of Plato and the contemporary Middle Platonists Clement found compatible ways of expressing the divine. Plato's description of the One (*Parmenides*) or the Good (*Republic*) as the highest principle, devoid of attributes and beyond being, are many times used by Clement to describe what is indescribable. He also found the *via negativa* or method of abstraction in the Middle Platonists helpful. The *via negativa* was an established doctrine in Middle Platonism which Clement adapted to the Christian's relation to the divine.

To Clement a mathematical conception of divine unity (μονάς), arrived at by the method of abstraction, can be used as a basic definition of God. By way of a deconstruction of all (positive) attributes, man may reach somehow to an idea of who God is. In his description of the method, the spiritual elements of purification (καθαρτικόν), confession (ὁμολογία), and

³⁰ Robert L. Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003), 165.

³¹ Cf. Henny Fiskå Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism* (Oxford: University Press, 2006). In this monograph my main purpose was to place the beginnings of Christian apophaticism earlier than what is traditionally done (in the Capadocians in the fourth century), namely in Clement of Alexandria.

contemplation (ἐποπτικόν) are brought together with the logical elements of analysis (ἀναλύσις) and abstraction (ἀφελόντες, περιελόντες).³²

But Clement differs from the traditional approaches of the *via negativa*, because he does not stop at the *monas*. After the method of abstraction has been exhausted, on the way to the knowledge of God we advance in two phases. First “we cast ourselves into the greatness of Christ,” but the movement does not stop at “the greatness of Christ”; there is still another step to make, and that is “into immensity (ἄχανές).” According to Liddell & Scott the word ἄχανές may mean ‘a yawning gulf,’ something ‘vast’ or ‘immense’ and the related noun ἄχανεία is rendered ‘infinite expanse.’ The expressions Clement here uses—“casting ourselves,” “the greatness of Christ” and “immensity”—are telling examples, I believe, of the mystical and suprarational aspects of his thinking. Moreover, not even the step “into immensity” provides any knowledge of God:

If, then, abstracting all that belongs to bodies and things called incorporeal, we cast ourselves (ἐπιρρίψαιμεν ἑαυτούς) into the greatness of Christ (μέγεθος τοῦ Χριστοῦ), and from there advance into immensity (ἄχανές) by holiness (ἀγιότητι), we may reach somehow to the conception of the Almighty, knowing *not what he is, but what he is not* (οὐχ ὃ ἐστίν, ὃ δὲ μὴ ἐστὶ γνωρίζαντες).³³

The last step “into immensity” only brings man *somehow* to a conception of God, not, however, to any true or essential knowledge of him. God still remains unknown. So, when the highest and most valuable knowledge, according to Clement, is the knowledge of God (γνώσις τοῦ θεοῦ) and knowledge of God seems so hard to obtain, what does he then mean by γνώσις τοῦ θεοῦ? Is it the negative knowledge, the realisation that God remains in the dark, that is the true knowledge of God?

3. FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

Though the most common attitude to faith and knowledge in the early church was not to separate them, some Christians, both before and after Clement, valued faith (πίστις) highly, teaching people only to believe. One expression of this is Tertullian’s famous saying in *The Heretical Prescriptions*: “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?”³⁴ Clement certainly regarded faith

³² *Strom.* V 71, 2.

³³ *Strom.* V 71, 3.

³⁴ Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 7 (ANF 3:246).

as the basis, a learning of essentials that enables one to change from heathen practice to virtues. But faith was at the same time closely related to knowledge and rationality.

Faith is the way in which fundamental truths are apprehended. As in Aristotle's epistemology, the fundamentals of something cannot be demonstrated but must be accepted before any argument can start. Faith is thus not irrational belief in something, but the true foundation of rational knowledge. This is how Clement puts it in the so-called eighth book of the *Stromateis*:

In point of fact, the philosophers admit that the first principles of all things are indemonstrable (ἀναποδείκτους). So if there is a demonstration at all, there is an absolute necessity that there be something that is self-evident (πιστόν), which is called primary and indemonstrable. Consequently all demonstration is traced up to indemonstrable faith (ἀναπόδεκτον πίστιν).³⁵

Therefore, faith to Clement is not an emotion or anything subconscious. It is not a feeling that God exists, nor anything so personal that its content is incommunicable. Faith is first of all an intellectual assent: "If you do not have faith, you cannot understand" (ἐάν μὴ πιστεύσητε, οὐδὲ μὴ συνήτε)³⁶ or, "The perfection of knowledge is faith."³⁷ It is a gift from God³⁸ and it brings salvation.³⁹ In faith we are up against the self-evident reality of God: "He who has believed the Logos knows the matter to be true for the Logos is truth."⁴⁰ Faith is, then, a form of knowledge.

This view of faith that is so closely related to knowledge and rationality, is also held by several modern thinkers. The Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886–1968), for instance, writes that "Christian faith is not irrational, not anti-rational, not supra-rational, but rational in the proper sense."⁴¹ Because it is so closely related to God's Logos, it is a thoroughly logical matter. Logos became man and part of man's world where language operates, "language not of an accidental, arbitrary, chaotic and incomprehensible kind, but language which comes forward with the claim to be true."⁴² The Logos is

³⁵ *Strom.* VIII 7, 1–2. See also *Strom.* VII 95, 6. Cf. Thomas F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), chapter 6: "The Hermeneutics of Clement of Alexandria."

³⁶ *Strom.* I 8, 2.

³⁷ *Paed.* I 29, 1.

³⁸ *Strom.* V 12, 2.

³⁹ *Strom.* VII 8, 1.

⁴⁰ *Strom.* II 12, 1.

⁴¹ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 23.

⁴² Barth, *Dogmatics*, 22.

God revealed to human reason, a truth to be learned as well as confessed. "The Creed of Christian faith rests upon knowledge."⁴³

The concept of *theoria* as well, the vision or contemplation of God, is closely related to knowledge. When speaking of how God is known, Clement along with other early Christian thinkers favoured the metaphor of seeing. "The goal of life is vision (θεωρία)," he writes in the first book of the *Stromateis*.⁴⁴ It seems to me that he uses the concept in two somewhat different ways. On the one hand, *theoria* is the final vision in the life to come when man sees God "face to face."⁴⁵ Then the Christian will stay close to the Lord and be forever "occupied in eternal contemplation (ἐν αἰδιότητι θεωρίας)"⁴⁶ and enjoy eternal rest. The concept of *theoria* being central to Plato's epistemology, Clement is responsible for domesticating it in Christianity. It occurs eighty-four times in his writings.⁴⁷ To define this vision of God more precisely, Clement also employed the term ἐποπτεία (and ἐποπτεύω), a term used to describe the last degree of the mystery cult of Eleusis. Man is carried, he writes, through mystic stages until he looks (ἐποπτεύειν) upon God "face to face with understanding and absolute certainty."⁴⁸

On the other hand, the contemplation of God may also be an activity that is clearly part of the life here and now. It is of such great value, Clement writes, that the gnostic prays that "it [*theoria*] may grow and abide with him."⁴⁹ Clement also describes it as an activity that may be exercised or trained: "Training himself in scientific contemplation (ἐγγυμναζόμενος τῇ ἐπιστημονικῇ θεωρίᾳ) he [the gnostic] goes on to contend on the strength of these higher and more universal truths."⁵⁰ Used in this way the concept of *theoria* takes on a more dynamic dimension, and it may even be understood as a means to taking control over the inappropriate passions in the gnostic's life: When he persists in "uninterrupted contemplation (θεωρία ἀδιάλειπτως)," he also "exercises himself in the discipline which teaches the curbing of pleasures and the right direction of action."⁵¹ In this aspect *theoria* comes close to prayer or *homilia* with God.

⁴³ Barth, *Dogmatics*, 22–23.

⁴⁴ *Strom.* I 166, 2.

⁴⁵ *Strom.* VII 68, 4. See also VII 10, 2.

⁴⁶ *Strom.* VII 10, 2.

⁴⁷ According to Stählin's index: Otto Stählin (ed.), *Clemens Alexandrinus, IV: Register*. GCS 39 (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1936).

⁴⁸ *Strom.* VII 57, 1.

⁴⁹ *Strom.* VII 46, 4.

⁵⁰ *Strom.* VII 61, 1.

⁵¹ *Strom.* VII 44, 7.

The dynamic dimension in Clement's thinking may also be seen in the way he describes the Christian's life as a spiritual and moral progress (προκοπή) towards gradually acquiring certain virtues and knowledge of God. A motivational factor seems to be his longing for knowledge: "He who holds converse with God ... makes progress towards knowledge and longs for it."⁵² Echoing the apostle Paul, he is "straining forward (ἐπεκτεινομένην, *scil.* τὴν ψυχὴν)" in a progress that seems to have no end.⁵³ "This [knowledge] leads us on to that perfect end which knows no end (ἀτελεύτητον), teaching us here the nature of the life we shall hereafter live with gods according to the will of God."⁵⁴ Clement's progress without end would seem to imply that a full knowledge of God is not obtained even in the life to come.

In Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335–395) this is made clearer. He describes the progress towards the knowledge of God as an infinite spiritual progress from light to darkness. Its infinity has its basis in God's own infinity (ἀπειρία). Gregory maintains that God's infinity implies that the progress—and therefore the knowledge of God—must be infinite.⁵⁵ This was by Jean Daniélou called Gregory's 'doctrine of *epektasis*' and his most important contribution to the Christian theology of man.⁵⁶ Though not as highly developed and not expressed with the same clarity as in Gregory, Clement's eternal progress contains some of the same elements. For his own ideas of God's infinity and unknowability may well have prompted him to describe man's progress towards knowledge of God in similar ways as Gregory, as being "an end which knows no end."⁵⁷ But whether this really implies that God not even in the life to come will be apprehended by man, that he will remain forever essentially a mystery and an enigma, is a question that Clement does not seem to answer in a consistent way.

⁵² *Strom.* VII 49, 1. See also VII 60, 2.

⁵³ *Strom.* VII 10, 1. Phil 3:13: "Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward (ἐπεκτεινόμενος) to what lies ahead."

⁵⁴ *Strom.* VII 56, 3.

⁵⁵ For instance *De beatitudinibus* 6. Translation in Jean Daniélou, *From Glory to Glory. Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings* (Crestwood/New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), 98f.

⁵⁶ Daniélou, *From Glory to Glory*, 47. Gregory used the term ἐπεκτείνωμαι in this context as well.

⁵⁷ P. Thomas Camelot, *Foi et gnose. Introduction à l'étude de la mystique chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Vrin, 1945), 50f., holds that Clement in the *Stromateis* describes two ways to the knowledge of God: a moral progress (book II) and an 'intellectual' progress (books V–VII).

4. PRAYER AS THE ROAD TO KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge and vision that the gnostic achieves in this life cannot be knowledge of God as he is, since he essentially remains unknown. The only knowledge of God relevant is the knowledge that is given in prayer, worship or contemplation. It may be termed 'participatory' knowledge, because it is a knowledge that is gained by participating in the love of the divine.⁵⁸ Through these 'activities' man may experience an intimate relationship that is first of all a relationship of love and friendship. It is a type of knowledge that may be characterized as a 'knowing through unknowing.' As Thomas Merton puts it: "In contemplation we know by unknowing. Or better, we know beyond all knowing and unknowing."⁵⁹ Through prayer and contemplation, knowledge of God that does not mean having the correct conceptions and ideas about God, may develop and grow. Clement also characterizes it as darkness. In his exegesis of the passage from Exodus 19, describing how Moses met God in a thick darkness or cloud, Clement holds that the darkness signifies that God is essentially inaccessible and unknown to man. It also signifies the impossibility of describing God or predicating anything of him.⁶⁰

This realization of the limits of language and thus also of the limits of man's rationality in relation to God leads to other ways of 'knowing' God. Clement describes this, as we have seen, in many ways in the seventh book of his *Stromateis*. Through faith (πίστις), fellowship, communion, converse (ὁμιλία), and contemplation (θεωρία), man may gradually 'know' God with knowledge that is communion and experience, not cognition.⁶¹ In this paradoxical knowledge, the darkness of God will always be a part, as in the words of Thomas Merton: "After all, anyone who has tried it is aware that the closer you get to God, the less question there can be of realizing Him or anything about Him."⁶²

⁵⁸ David W. Fagerberg, "Prayer as Theology," in Hammerling (ed.), *A History of Prayer*, 133.

⁵⁹ Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*, 1.

⁶⁰ *Strom.* V 78, 3–4.

⁶¹ Cf. Camelot, *Foi et gnose*, 99.

⁶² Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*, 169.

CLEMENS VON ALEXANDRIEN UND ORIGENES ZUM GEBET:
VERSUCH EINES PARADIGMENVERGLEICHS
ANHAND IHRER SCHRIFTSTELLEN¹

Lorenzo Perrone

1. FRÖMMIGKEIT UND THEOLOGIE:
DIE CHRISTOLOGISCHEN VORAUSSETZUNGEN ZUR REDE VOM GEBET

Es mag sein, dass das siebte Buch der *Stromateis* – oder besser gesagt, ein größerer Abschnitt daraus (*Strom.* VII 35, 1–49, 8) – die älteste christliche Abhandlung zum Gebet darstellt, obwohl die Unsicherheit betreffs der Datierung uns eher dazu neigen lässt, Clemens' Werk als gleichzeitig mit Tertullian's *De oratione* zu betrachten.² Es ist auf jeden Fall sicher, dass in beiden Schriften zwei sehr unterschiedliche Ansätze erkennbar sind, wobei dies nicht unbedingt eine völlige Trennung der geistigen Horizonte beider Autoren besagt. Natürlich sollten wir nicht das besondere Profil der Schrift von Clemens und damit des anvisierten Publikums aus dem Auge verlieren, denn der Alexandriner wendet sich ausdrücklich an die ‚Griechen‘ (Ἕλληνες), d.h. die ‚Heiden‘, speziell diejenigen, die philosophisch ausgebildet waren und sich auch deswegen ein falsches Bild vom Christentum machten, indem sie seine Anhänger des ‚Atheismus‘ bezichtigten. Infolgedessen, anders als Tertullian, wird Clemens von einem apologetischen

¹ Die *Stromateis* werden nach den Ausgaben von SC zitiert, mit Ausnahme vom dritten Buch, dessen Text anhand von GCS angegeben wird.

² Nach Riemer Roukema, *Clemens van Alexandrië. Het gebed van de gnosticus en andere teksten. Een keuze uit Clemens' Stromateis boek VII* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1997), die Zeitspanne für die *Stromateis* erstreckt sich vom Jahr 193 bis 215, während Henry Chadwick, *Pensiero cristiano antico e tradizione classica* [= *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966] (Florenz: La nuova Italia, 1995), 37–38, behauptet, das einzige sichere Datum in der Biographie von Clemens sei, dass er *Strom.* I „zwischen 193 und 211“ verfasst habe. Allerdings vermutet Giovanni Pini in Clemente di Alessandria, *Gli Stromati, Note di vera filosofia* (Mailand: Paoline, 2006), 605, Anm. 2, dass *Strom.* VI und VII in den Jahren 202–204 verfasst worden sind. Tertullians *De oratione* wird kurz nach dem *Apologeticum*, d.h. um 200–206, datiert (vgl. *Tertullian. De baptismo, De oratione. Von der Taufe, Vom Gebet*, übersetzt und eingeleitet von Dietrich Schleyer, Fontes Christiani 76; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006, 19–27).

Anliegen geleitet, das sich vornehmlich auf das Heidentum bezieht, ohne auf das Problem der christlichen Identität auch dem Judentum gegenüber irgendwie einzugehen.³ Dazu behandelt Clemens bekanntlich das Thema vom Gebet im Rahmen einer weiter ausholenden Darstellung der ‚Frömmigkeit‘ (εὐσέβεια bzw. θεοσέβεια) des vollkommenen Christen als des ‚wahren Gnostikers‘, die teilweise an Motive des vorangehenden Buches anknüpft. Insofern ist das Gebet nur ein Aspekt, wenn auch von zentraler oder sogar zusammenfassender Bedeutung, des Vollkommenheitsideals, das Clemens in seiner Replik auf die philosophische Kritik des Christentums entwirft.⁴

Die Besonderheit des Publikums sowie das vom Autor verfolgte Ziel bestimmen die Schrift des Clemens vom literarischen und argumentativen Standpunkt aus und unterscheiden sie deshalb nicht nur vom afrikanischen Zeitgenossen Tertullian, wie bereits angedeutet, sondern auch von seinem alexandrinischen Nachfolger Origenes. Wie der Autor selbst zu Beginn ankündigt, will er sich einer Sprache bedienen, die den gezielten Lesern besser verständlich sein sollte: so möchte Clemens, mindestens im ersten Anlauf, darauf verzichten, seine Thesen mit Hilfe von Schriftstellen zu begründen. Um jedoch Missverständnisse seiner Glaubensgenossen zu vermeiden, die auf eine solche Darstellungsweise negativ reagieren könnten, beteuert Clemens sogleich, dass in Wirklichkeit die „Schriften des Herrn“ die versteckte Quelle sind, woraus seine ganze Rede schöpft.⁵ Im

³ Anders als im *Strom.* VI, wo Clemens gleichermassen bei Juden und Heiden eine ungenügende Kenntnis Gottes bemängelt. Vgl. auch in *Strom.* II 1, 2 seine Hoffnung auf die Bekehrung der Juden infolge seiner Apologie an die Heiden (s. dazu Alain Le Boulluec, „Pour qui, pourquoi, comment? Les *Stromates* de Clément d'Alexandrie,“ in ders., *Alexandrie antique et chrétienne: Clément et Origène*, Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 2006, 102 f.).

⁴ Contra Michael J. Brown, *The Lord's Prayer through North African Eyes. A Window into Early Christianity* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), der folgende Umstellung des Inhalts unnötigerweise vornimmt: „Since this is a treatise on prayer, it involves the issue of εὐσέβεια“ (S. 132). Nach Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952), ist das Gebet nicht nur der unvermeidbare Weg zur Begegnung mit Gott, sondern auch die Quintessenz des geistigen Leben: „Das Gebet erscheint Clemens als das Wertvollste und das Wesen der Christen am meisten kennzeichnende“ (S. 411). Zur εὐσέβεια als der höchsten Tugend, vgl. *Strom.* II 78, 1–2, während V 67, 1 die folgende platonisierende Definition von θεοσέβεια bietet: Θυσία δὲ ἡ τῷ θεῷ δεκτή σώματος τε καὶ τῶν τούτου παθῶν ἀμετανόητος χωρισμός. ἡ ἀληθὴς τῷ ὄντι θεοσέβεια αὕτη. Als einheitliches Thema von *Strom.* VI–VII gibt zunächst Clemens in VI 1, 1 folgendes an: ὅστις ἀν εἴῃ κατὰ τὸν βίον ὁ γνωστικός.

⁵ *Strom.* VII 1, 4: Κἂν ἑτεροῖά τισι τῶν πολλῶν καταφαίνηται τὰ ὑφ' ἡμῶν λεγόμενα τῶν κυριακῶν γραφῶν, ἵστέον ὅτι ἐκεῖθεν ἀναπνεῖ τε καὶ ζῇ, καὶ τὰς ἀφορμὰς ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἔχοντα τὸν νοῦν μόνον, οὐ τὴν λέξιν, παριστάν ἐπαγγέλλεται. Vgl. eine ähnliche Formulierung über das Verhältnis des Paulus zum Alten Testament in IV 134, 2: ἀλλ' οὖν ἡ γραφή αὐτῷ ἐκ τῆς παλαιᾶς

übrigen, trotz der angegebenen Methode, scheut Clemens gar nicht zurück, Zitate aus den Heiligen Schriften bzw. Hinweise darauf schon im einleitenden Teil des siebten Buches anzuführen.

Bevor das eigentliche Thema des Gebets zur Sprache kommt, schickt Clemens eine Darstellung der Frömmigkeit bzw. des Kults voran, die vom wahren Gnostiker Gott gezollt werden. Dabei handelt es sich tendenziell, wenn auch im gewöhnlich lose strukturierten Rahmen der *Stromateis*, um eine systematisch wirkende Darstellung, welche erneut den Zweck bezeugt, die christliche Botschaft mit dem philosophischen Denken, vor allem platonischer Prägung, zu verbinden. Dementsprechend illustriert Clemens die Gotteslehre, auf die sich die christliche Frömmigkeit gründet. Diese wiederum wird von ihm in erster Linie nicht als Ausdruck einer gottesdienstlichen bzw. devotionalen Praxis verstanden, sondern als die Lebensform des Vollkommenen, die auch in Gottesdienst und Gebet ihren Ausdruck findet. Ein solcher, im echten Sinne des Wortes, ‚theologischer‘ Rahmen des Gebets geht bei Clemens von der Anerkennung des ‚Vaters des Alls‘ als der ersten Ursache aus, die durch den Sohn ermöglicht wird. Er bildet ja den Zugang zur transzendenten Göttlichkeit des Vaters, dem höchsten Gott, wobei dieser als solcher apophatisch Gegenstand einer Anbetung bleibt, die sich in stiller Kontemplation entfaltet.⁶ Mit dieser Bemerkung lässt Clemens sofort ahnen, welche Rolle bei ihm das schweigsame Gebet als höchste Form des Betens einnimmt.⁷ Im Unterschied zu Origenes, der übrigens dieses Motiv fast nur in seinem homiletischen Werk kennt, beruft sich Clemens u. a. auf

ἡρτηται διαθήκης, ἐκεῖθεν ἀναπνέουσα καὶ λαλοῦσα. Zum ‚kryptischen‘ Gebrauch der Heiligen Schrift und seiner strukturellen Bedeutung für das Denken des Clemens s. Marco Rizzi, „Il fondamento epistemologico della mistica in Clemente Alessandrino,“ in L.F. Pizzolato and M. Rizzi (Hg.), *Origene maestro di vita spirituale* (Mailand: Vita e Pensiero, 2001), 91–122.

⁶ *Strom.* VII 2, 3: παρ’ οὗ ἐκμανθάνειν τὸ ἐπέκεινα αἵτιον, τὸν πατέρα τῶν ὄλων, τὸ πρέσβιστον καὶ πάντων εὐεργετικώτατον, οὐκέτι φωνῇ παραδιδόμενον, σεβάσματι δὲ καὶ σιγῇ μετὰ ἐκπλήξεως ἁγίας σεβαστὸν καὶ σεπτὸν κυριώτατα (vgl. auch V 65, 2). Zur Bedeutung dieser Stelle für die Sicht des Gebets bei Clemens s. Raoul Mortley, „The Theme of Silence in Clement of Alexandria,“ *JTS* 24 (1973) 197–202: „Silence is the symbol of a higher form of knowledge. Clement’s concept of prayer, which is defined as inward contact with God, confirms this impression. To understand prayer on the simple model of verbal contact is insufficient, for the spirit ascends to the νοητὴν οὐσίαν. Prayer denotes a state of being; it is ὁμιλία with God“ (S. 201–202). Vgl. auch Henny Fiskå Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 162–164.

⁷ Allerdings, weder *Strom.* II 68, 3 noch V 67, 2–3, wo das Thema des Schweigens vorkommt, beziehen sich unmittelbar auf das Gebet. Im Gegensatz dazu verteidigt *Strom.* IV 171, 1 ausdrücklich das schweigsame Gebet in Bezug auf die pythagorische Mahnung „laut zu reden“ beim Beten: sie sei nicht gegen das stille Gebet zu verstehen, sondern ziele darauf, Gebete zu formulieren, worüber man sich vor den Ohren der Leute nicht schämen solle.

das pythagoreische Schweigen als Bedingung für die Transzendierung der sinnlichen Welt und die daraus resultierende noetische Schau Gottes.⁸

In dem sich daran anschliessenden Abschnitt richtet sich aber die Aufmerksamkeit des Clemens auf die Person des Sohnes, der nicht nur als Vermittler für die Kenntnis des Vaters, sondern auch als Modell für das Leben des Christen fungiert, während die Antwort des Gläubigen im Kontext einer von den Tugenden geprägten Praxis skizziert wird.⁹ Schon hier erweist sich die Vollkommenheit des wahren Gnostikers als kein solipsistisches Ideal, weil die ‚Sorge um sich selbst‘ nie von der Bindung an den Anderen gelöst wird, u.z. aufgrund der ‚Liebe‘ (ἀγάπη), die dem Gläubigen innewohnt.¹⁰ Die Korrektur der philosophischen Perspektive im Sinne des Christentums ergibt sich vor allem in Bezug auf das Endziel des ‚göttlichen Kults‘. Wenn Clemens dies, einem bekannten platonischen Motiv entsprechend, mit der ‚Gottähnlichkeit‘ (ὁμοίωσις bzw. ἑξομοίωσις θεῶ) identifiziert, bemüht er sich, es so umzuinterpretieren: die vollkommenen Christen sind diejenigen, die mit Gott vertraut sind, weil sie durch den Hohepriester Christus „mit ihm verkehren“ und ihn in ihrer ganzen Lebensweise imitieren.¹¹ Durch den Gedanken an die *imitatio Dei* als *imitatio Christi* kommt also das Bild des Gebets als ‚Gespräch‘ (ὁμιλία) mit Gott schon hier zum Vorschein. Dieses nimmt die Definition wieder auf, die zuvor Maximus von Tyrus (vielleicht im Anschluss an das verlorene *Περὶ εὐχῆς* des Aristoteles) in seiner Dissertation *Εἰ δέ τι εὐχέσθαι* gebraucht hatte.¹² Jedoch, die Wieder-

⁸ *Strom.* V 67, 3: Τοῦτο ἄρα βούλεται καὶ τῷ Πυθαγόρῃ ἡ τῆς πενταετίας σιωπῇ, ἣν τοῖς γνωρίμοις παρεγγυᾷ, ὡς δὴ ἀποστραφέντες τῶν αἰσθητῶν ψιλῶ τῷ νῷ τὸ θεῖον ἐποπτεύοιεν. Hier gebraucht Clemens das Wort σιωπῇ statt σιγῇ. Für seine Vorstellung vom stillen Gebet stützt sich Origenes besonders auf 1Kor 14, 15, eine Stelle die in *Strom.* nie vorkommt (vgl., z.B., *Hom. Num.* X 3, 3 und XI 9).

⁹ *Strom.* VII 5, 4 weist am deutlichsten auf die stetige Schau des Vaters durch den Sohn und dessen Wirkung nach dem Willen des Vaters in der Schöpfung hin. Vgl. auch *Strom.* I 12, 3; VII 7, 7.

¹⁰ Rizzi, *Il fondamento epistemologico*, 101 erörtert so den zentralen Wert der ἀγάπη im Vollkommenheitsideal des Clemens: „fondandosi sulla fede, il cristiano vive nella speranza, e il suo τέλος, fine e perfezione, al tempo stesso, è l' ἀγάπη. Si tratta di un programma contemporaneamente epistemologico, perché il fine ultimo ne è la visione di Dio, in cui però la θεωρία platonica risulta sagomata entro il contesto cristiano dell' ὁμοίωσις per ἀγάπη al Logos, e di vita spirituale, di progressione nelle virtù paoline, in cui alla pienezza della contemplazione corrisponde la pienezza delle virtù e il loro assorbimento nell' ἀγάπη divina.“

¹¹ *Strom.* VII 13, 2: Αὕτη τοίνυν ἡ ἐνέργεια τοῦ τελειωθέντος γνωστικοῦ, προσομιλεῖν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ μεγάλου ἀρχιερέως, ἑξομοιούμενον εἰς δύναμιν τῷ κυρίῳ διὰ πάσης τῆς εἰς τὸν θεὸν θεραπειας.

¹² Vgl. Maximus von Tyrus, *Diss.* V 8 (Trapp 44,188–45,190): ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν ἡγεῖ τὴν τοῦ φιλοσόφου εὐχὴν αἵτησιν εἶναι τῶν οὐ παρόντων, ἐγὼ δὲ ὁμιλίαν καὶ διάλεκτον πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς περὶ τῶν παρόντων καὶ ἐπίδειξιν τῆς ἀρετῆς. Zur möglichen aristotelischen Abstammung von ὁμιλία,

aufnahme desselben Begriffs durch Clemens geschieht jetzt in einem veränderen Rahmen, da sie durch ihre biblische Begründung gekennzeichnet ist.

2. BIBLISCHE UND EKKLESIALE ASPEKTE DES GEBETS

Auf solch eine Änderung weist zunächst die christologische Grundlage des Gebets hin. Nicht zufällig wird der Beginn der euchologischen Abhandlung (*Strom.* VII 35, 1) von der Aussage markiert, der Sohn sei der Vermittler in der betenden Beziehung zwischen den Christen und dem Vater: den Gläubigen obliegt deshalb, den Logos jederzeit zu verehren und durch ihn den Vater.¹³ Dank der Kenntnis, die der Logos den Gläubigen mitteilt, verherrlichen sie Gott im Gebet. Hier wird die Person des Vermittlers bedeutsamerweise mit der aus dem Hebräerbrief entnommenen Bezeichnung ‚Hohepriester‘ designiert (Hb 4, 14). Es handelt sich um einen christologischen Titel, der nicht nur in unserem Zusammenhang sondern auch anderswo in den *Stromateis* relativ häufig vorkommt.¹⁴ Wie schon in *Strom.* II angedeutet, eignet sich dieser Titel, besonders wenn die Rede von Frömmigkeit und Kult ist, denn der Logos als Hohepriester kennt als einziger den richtigen Kult Gottes und vermag dadurch am ehesten, die Menschen zu ihm zu führen.¹⁵ In demselben Buch wird noch einmal das Ziel der ὁμοίωσις θεῷ als Adoption zur Gottes Sohnschaft in Bezug auf den Logos als Gottessohn erwähnt, wobei

s. André Méhat, „Sur deux définitions de la prière,“ in G. Dorival und A. Le Boulluec (Hg.), *Origeniana sexta* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 115–120. Wie *Strom.* VI 104, 1 zeigt, wird bei Clemens die Vorstellung des Gebets als ὁμιλία einerseits vom Paradigma des Moses, andererseits von dessen Interpretation bei Paulus in 2 Kor 3, 7 getragen.

¹³ *Strom.* VII 35, 1: Σέβειν δὲ δεῖν ἐγκελευόμεθα καὶ τιμᾶν τὸν λόγον, σωτήρᾳ τε αὐτὸν καὶ ἡγεμόνα εἶναι πεισθέντες, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸν πατέρα, οὐκ ἐν ἐξαιρέτοις ἡμέραις, ὥσπερ ἄλλοι τινές, ἀλλὰ συνεχῶς τὸν ὅλον βίον τοῦτο πράττοντες καὶ κατὰ πάντα πρόπον. Die Darstellung erfolgt ohne dass der neue Abschnitt angekündigt wird, es sei man verbindet ihn mit der Zwischenbemerkung in *Strom.* IV 171, 2, wo Clemens verspricht, mit dem Fortgang seiner Schrift das Thema vom Gebet zu behandeln. Auch *Strom.* V 67, 1ff. kann nach Le Boulluec (SC 279, 235 f. ad loc.) als Parallele gelten: „Il prend l'allure d'un traité Περὶ θυσίας“ (mit Hinweis auf eine entsprechende Sequenz in *Strom.* VII nach André Méhat, Kephalaia. *Recherches sur les matériaux des Stromates de Clément d'Alexandrie*, thèse dactyl., Paris, 1966, 170).

¹⁴ Der Gedanke erscheint bereits in *Strom.* II 45, 7: die Gottähnlichkeit impliziert gottähnlich mit dem Erlöser zu werden, indem man dem Gott des Alls durch den Logos als Hohepriester seinen Kult zollt (θεραπεύων τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως λόγου). In IV 151, 3 wird der Hohepriester Christus als ‚eins‘ mit Gott Vater nebeneinandergestellt, während VI 153, 4 nach Joh 1, 3 Aaron, als Typus des Hohepriesters Christus, auf den Logos als Demiurg bezieht.

¹⁵ *Strom.* II 21, 4: μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ μόνος ἐπιστήμων τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ θεραπείας.

diese sich in der Verherrlichung des Vaters durch den Hohepriester äussert.¹⁶ Kult bzw. Frömmigkeit und Gebet sind also strukturell mit der Person des Hohepriesters verbunden, worin Clemens dem entsprechenden Ansatz des Origenes vorangeht. Ähnlich wie Clemens sieht Origenes den eigentlichen Adressaten des Gebets im Vater, auch wenn er die Rolle des Sohnes als Vermittler noch schärfer betont. Für ihn impliziert das Beten der Christen die verbindliche Vermittlung von Christus, denn nach *Περὶ εὐχῆς* ist er als Hohepriester vor allem derjenige, der die Gebete der Gläubigen Gott dem Vater darbringt.¹⁷

Neben der klar formulierten christologischen Prämisse weist Clemens auch auf die pneumatologische Dimension hin, obwohl die Anerkennung der Gegenwart des Geistes beim Beten weniger ergiebig als bei Tertullian und noch viel weniger als bei Origenes ausfällt. Wir können trotzdem eine einmalige Anspielung auf die ‚unaussprechlichen Seufzen‘ von Röm 8, 26 feststellen,¹⁸ wobei der betende Gnostiker in seinem Bemühen ‚pneumatisch‘ zu werden, sich mit dem Geist durch die Liebe vereint. Wir treffen auf diese Weise einen Gedanken wieder, welcher der pneumatischen Verwandlung des Beters sowohl bei Tertullian als auch bei Origenes nahekommt.¹⁹ Auf jeden Fall, nirgendwo verwertet Clemens, im Unterschied zu Origenes, die aporetische Aussage der paulinischen Passage, „wir wissen nicht, worum

¹⁶ *Strom.* II 134, 2: ἥ τε πρὸς τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον ὡς οἶόν τε ἑξομοίωσις τέλος ἐστὶ καὶ εἰς τὴν τελείαν υἱοθεσίαν διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀποκατάστασις, δοξάζουσιν αἰεὶ τὸν πατέρα διὰ τοῦ μεγάλου ἀρχιερέως τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ συγκληρονόμου καταξιώσαντος ἡμᾶς εἰπεῖν.

¹⁷ Anders als *Comm. Jo.* I, 35, 255–258 (der Text des Origenes wird nach den Ausgaben von GCS zitiert), das, in Anlehnung an Hb 4, 15 und 9, 28, die Bezeichnung ‚Hohepriester‘ im Rahmen der Erlösungslehre erklärt: Διὰ τοῦτο μέγας ἐστὶν ἀρχιερεὺς, ἐπειδὴ περ πάντα ἀποκαθίστησι τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς βασιλείαν, οἰκονομῶν τὰ ἐν ἐκάστω τῶν γεννητῶν ἑλλιπῇ ἀναπληρωθῆναι πρὸς τὸ χωρῆσαι δόξαν πατρικὴν.

¹⁸ *Strom.* VII 49, 7: ἀλαλήτοις στεναγμοῖς ἐπικαλέσεται τὸν πατέρα. An dieser Stelle beschreibt Clemens das Gebetsleben des Gnostikers im Sinne der *oratio continua*, sodass das ‚Seufzen‘ sich zunächst auf ihn und nicht auf den Geist selbst bezieht. Sonst kommt Röm 8, 26–27 nirgendwo in *Strom.* vor. Für ein zusammenfassendes Bild von Origenes Vorstellung vom Gebet s. zuletzt meinen Beitrag: „Goldene Schalen voll von Räucherwerk (Apc 5, 8): Das Bild vom Gebet bei Origenes“, *JAC* 50 (2007) 51–71.

¹⁹ *Strom.* VII 44, 5: τὸ παντοκρατορικὸν δὲ βούλημα ἐγνωκώς, καὶ ἔχων ἅμα καὶ εὐχόμενος, προσεχῆς τῇ πανσθενεῖ δυνάμει γενόμενος, πνευματικὸς εἶναι σπουδάζας διὰ τῆς ἀορίστου ἀγάπης ἡγνῶται τῷ πνεύματι. Zum pneumatologischen Hintergrund s. Luis Francisco Ladaria, *El Espíritu en Clemente Alejandrino. Estudio teológico-antropológico* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas de Madrid, 1980), 233f. Zum Vergleich mit Tertullian, s. vor allem *De orat.* 12: *Nec ab ira solummodo, sed omni omnino confusione animi libera esse debet orationis intentio de tali spiritu emissa, qualis est spiritus ad quem emittitur. Neque enim agnosci poterit spiritu sancto spiritus inquinatus aut tristis a laeto aut impeditus a libero. Nemo adversarium recipit, nemo nisi comparem suum admittit.* Was Origenes betrifft, vgl. besonders *Or.* IX 2.

wir in rechter Weise beten sollen.“ Die betonte Anknüpfung an Röm 8, 26 bei seinem alexandrinischen Nachfolger signalisiert insofern einen anderen Akzent, der auf das schärfere Bewußtsein vom ‚Problem des Betens‘ bei Origenes zurückzuführen ist.²⁰

Das Gebet der Christen bringt nach Clemens auch angelogische Aspekte ans Licht, die wiederum im Zusammenhang mit seiner ekklesiologischen Dimension zu sehen sind. Was diesen Aspekt angeht, darf man wohl von einer spürbaren Kontinuität der Vorstellungen bei Clemens und Origenes sprechen. Mit dem Bezug auf die Engel sieht nun Clemens ein himmlisches Pendant zur Lage der Beter auf der Erde. Soweit der ‚wahre Gnostiker‘, von einer rechten Vorstellung Gottes ausgehend, seine Gebete an ihn richtet, gesellt er sich zu dem Engelschor und hat an dessen tugendhaftem Zustand Anteil.²¹ Die Verbindung mit den Engeln manifestiert sich für Clemens besonders durch die Vorstellung vom Gebetsleben als *oratio continua*, d.h. als ständige Erinnerung an Gott, welche in die Schau der himmlischen Wirklichkeit hineinführt. So ist der vollkommene Christ, auch wenn er individuell betet, nie einsam, weil er an der Gemeinschaft der Heiligen teilnimmt.²² Die durch das Beten der Christen implizierte Gemeinschaft kommt bei Clemens auch in kosmologischer und ekklesiologischer Sicht zur Geltung. In dieser Hinsicht ignoriert er nicht die agonistische Dimension, die sich als so einflußreich bei Origenes erweisen wird. Demnach betrachtet auch Clemens die Welt als ein ‚Theater‘ oder ein ‚Stadion‘, das auf

²⁰ A. Le Boulluec, „Les réflexions de Clément sur la prière et le traité d'Origène,“ in L. Perrone (Hg.), *Origeniana Octava* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 404 (= wiederaufgedr. in ders., *Alexandrie antique et chrétienne. Clément et Origène*, Édition établie par C.G. Conticello, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006, 146) hat diesen Aspekt zurecht erkannt: „Si cependant les définitions et les propositions de l'un et de l'autre se rejoignent, elles sont soumises par Origène à l'emprise de Rm 8, 26.“

²¹ *Strom.* VII 45, 1: Ἀξιολόγως γοῦν τὰ περὶ θεοῦ διειληφώς πρὸς αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας χοροῦ μυστικῶς, λόγῳ τῷ προτρέποντι τὸ μέγεθος τῆς ἀρετῆς, κατ' ἀξίαν αὐτὴν τε καὶ τὰ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἐνδεικνυμένῳ, χρήται, μετὰ διάρματος ἐνθέου τῆς εὐχῆς τοῖς νοητοῖς καὶ πνευματικοῖς ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα γνωστικῶς οἰκιστοῦμενος. Zur Identifizierung des χορὸς μυστικός mit den Engeln s. Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*, 156 Anm. 2 ad loc. Vgl. auch *Strom.* VII 49, 4: ἐνοποιεῖ τῷ θείῳ χορῷ. Hierzu unterstreicht Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker*, 419 die Bindung zwischen innerem Gebet und mystischer Schau: „während des geistigen Gebets erfolgt die Schau, jenes ist das Mittel, um diese zu erlangen. Der Betende, der von unstillbarer Sehnsucht nach Gott erfüllt ist ..., sinkt gleichsam in die göttliche Welt ein. Clemens hat also dafür ein lebhaftes Empfinden, dass jeder mystische Aufstieg zugleich ein Wachsen im Gebet ist, dass dieser nur in der Form höheren Gebetsgnaden erfolgt.“

²² *Strom.* VII 78, 6: δ δὲ καὶ μετ' ἀγγέλων εὐχεται, ὥς ἂν ἤδη καὶ ἰσάγγελος, οὐδὲ ἔξω ποτὲ τῆς ἀγίας φρουρᾶς γίνεται· καὶ μόνος εὐχεται, τὸν τῶν ἀγίων χορὸν συνιστάμενον ἔχει. Nach *Strom.* IV 117, 2, begleitet das Gebet der Engel den Aufstieg des Gnostikers zu Gott: πλήρη δὲ γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοσύνης συνευχόμενοι παραπέμπουσι.

verschiedenen Ebenen Gott Vater, den Sohn und die Engel miteinander, u. z. als Veranstalter bzw. als solidarische Zuschauer bei dem vom Gnostiker gegen die dämonischen Mächte geführten Kampf.²³ Obwohl Clemens, anders als Origenes, das Bild vom Gnostiker als ‚Athleten‘ nicht unmittelbar mit dem vom betenden Christen verbindet, führt er jene agonistische Vorstellung bei seiner Behandlung der Frömmigkeit des wahren Gnostikers ein, die ihrerseits das Beten miteinschließt.

Was das ekklesiale Szenarium angeht, so kommt es mit der Idee des reinen Opfers, entsprechend dem Bild des ‚zusammengesetzten Weihrauchs‘ (in Ex 30, 34–37 oder Lv 16, 12) besonders ans Licht. Denn ein solches Opfer entsteht bei Clemens aus der betenden Vereinigung verschiedener Sprachen, Stimmen und Völker, nach dem Bild der Kirche als Leib Christi in Eph 4, 13.²⁴ Interessanterweise sind die alttestamentlichen Stellen – aus denen Clemens das Bild vom ‚zusammengesetzten Weihrauch‘ entnimmt – auch von Origenes für seine Anschauung vom Gebet herangezogen worden. ‚Weihrauch‘ ist ja bei ihm das am häufigsten gebrauchte Bild für das Gebet, speziell anhand von Ps 140 (141), 2. Aber in der 18. *Homilie zum Buch Jeremia* spielt Origenes auch auf den ‚zusammengesetzten Weihrauch‘ von Ex 30, 34–37, oder noch eher von Lv 16, 12 an, um zwischen dem Gebet des Gerechten und demjenigen des Sünders zu unterscheiden und damit sein Modell des ‚spirituellen Gebets‘ erneut zu formulieren.²⁵

²³ *Strom.* VII 20, 3–4: Οὗτός ἐστιν, οὗτος ὁ ἀθλητὴς ἀληθῶς ὁ ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ σταδίῳ, τῷ καλῷ κόσμῳ, τὴν ἀληθινὴν νίκην κατὰ πάντων στεφανούμενος τῶν παθῶν. Ὁ τε γὰρ ἀγωνοθέτης ὁ παντοκράτωρ θεός, ὃς τε βραβευτὴς ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, θεαταὶ δὲ ἄγγελοι καὶ θεοί, καὶ τὸ παγκράτιον τὸ πάμμαχον οὐ πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα, ἀλλὰ τὰς διὰ σαρκῶν ἐνεργούσας πνευματικὰς ἐξουσίας ἐμπαθῶν παθῶν τούτων περιγινόμενος τῶν μεγάλων ἀνταγωνισμάτων. Zur Interpretation dieser Stelle s. bes. Leonardo Lugaresi, *Il teatro di Dio. Il problema degli spettacoli nel cristianesimo antico (II–IV secolo)* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2008), 489–509.

²⁴ *Strom.* VII 34, 2: Δεῖ τοίνυν θυσίας προσφέρειν τῷ θεῷ μὴ πολυτελεῖς, ἀλλὰ θεοφιλεῖς (Theophrastus, *De piet.* fr. 9 Pötscher), καὶ τὸ θυμίαμα ἐκεῖνο τὸ σύνθετον τὸ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τὸ ἐκ πολλῶν γλωσσῶν τε καὶ φωνῶν κατὰ τὴν εὐχὴν συγκείμενον, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἐκ διαφορῶν ἐθνῶν τε καὶ φύσεων τῇ κατὰ τὰς διαθήκας δόσει σκευαζόμενον εἰς τὴν ἐνότητά τῆς πίστεως (vgl. Eph 4, 13) καὶ κατὰ τοὺς αἰῶνας συναγόμενον, καθαρῶ μὲν τῷ νῷ, δικαίᾳ δὲ καὶ ὀρθῇ τῇ πολιτείᾳ, ἐξ ὧν ἔργων εὐχῆς τε δικαίας.

²⁵ *Hom. Jer.* XVIII 10: τὰ πρῶν ἐιρημένα εἰς τὸν ἑκατοστὸν τεσσαρακοστὸν Ψαλμὸν ἐὰν ἀναλάβωμεν, νοήσομεν τί ἐστὶ τὸ εἰς κενὸν ἐθυμίασαν. ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ Ψαλμῷ τοιοῦτόν τι εἰρημένον· γενηθήτω ἡ προσευχή μου ὡς θυμίαμα ἐνώπιόν σου (Ps 140 [141], 2). οὐκοῦν ἡ προσευχή μου σύνθετος ... λεπτῆς καρδίας, ὅτε μὴ πχύνεται ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν, ἀναπεμπομένη γίνεται ὡς θυμίαμα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. εἰ οὖν ἡ τοῦ δικαίου προσευχή θυμίαμά ἐστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡ τοῦ ἀδίκου προσευχή θυμίαμα μέν, τοιοῦτον δὲ θυμίαμα ὥστ' ἂν λεχθῆναι περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐχομένου ἀδίκου· εἰς κενὸν ἐθυμίασαν (Jer 18, 15). Gerade der dreifache Gebrauch des Adjektivs λεπτός verbindet diese Stelle mit der Auslegung von *Hom. Lev.* IX 8 über Lv 16, 12 LXX (πλήσει τὰς χεῖρας θυμιάματος συνθέσεως λεπτής).

Mit Hilfe des Motivs vom ‚reinen Opfer‘ entfaltet Clemens zusätzlich den ekklesialen Kontext des Gebets, wobei er dadurch auch den Kontrast zur religiösen Tradition des Heidentums betont. An die Polemik des *Protrepticus* weiter anknüpfend, äußert Clemens die Idee, wonach einerseits die Kirche als ‚Versammlung der Erwählten‘, andererseits der vollkommene Gnostiker selbst die wahren Tempeln Gottes sind. Es ist also nicht mehr nötig Gott Opfer darzubringen, weil jetzt das Gebet das rechte Opfer ist. Dies gilt sowohl auf persönlicher als auch auf gemeinschaftlicher Ebene. Auf diese Weise bildet in erster Instanz das Gebet, sofern es „das beste und heiligste Opfer“ ist, das eigentliche Opfer der Kirche. Dies wird auf dem Altar dargebracht, der aus der irdischen Versammlung der Gläubigen zusammengesetzt ist, wobei sie mit ihren Gebeten „einer einzigen Stimme und eines einzigen Gedankens“ teilhaftig werden.²⁶ Einem derartigen Opfer entspringt der echte Hauch, der aus der Darbringung des Logos bestehend, wie Parfüm aus den Seelen der Heiligen aufsteigt.²⁷ Individuell gesehen, ist dann das Leben des Vollkommenen stets ein Fest, eine ununterbrochene Feier Gottes, die sich mittels der Gebete als Opfer vollzieht.

3. DIE *ORATIO CONTINUA* ALS GEMEINSAMER NENNER

In dem Gesamtaufbau der klementinischen Darstellung – die sich wegen der vom Autor gewählten literarischen Form nicht leicht systematisieren lässt – tritt vor allem ein Aspekt in den Vordergrund: es ist eben das Motiv der *oratio continua*, das die verschiedenen, aneinandergereihten Elemente der Reflexion unter ein Dach bringen kann.²⁸ Im Hinblick auf das Vollkommenheitsideal des Gnostikers, liegt wohl Clemens ein solches Motiv am nächsten. In der Tat beginnt die spezielle Behandlung unseres Themas mit

²⁶ *Strom.* VII 31, 8: "Ἐστὶ γοῦν τὸ παρ' ἡμῖν θυσιαστήριον ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἐπίγειον ἄθροισμα τῶν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἀνακειμένων, μίαν ὥσπερ ἔχον φωνὴν καὶ μίαν γνώμην.

²⁷ *Strom.* VII 32, 4: "Ἡ σύμπνοια δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας λέγεται κυρίως. Καὶ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ θυσία τῆς ἐκκλησίας λόγος ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγίων ψυχῶν ἀναθυμιάμενος, ἐκαλυπτομένης ἅμα τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ τῆς διανοίας ἀπάσης τῷ θεῷ.

²⁸ Vgl. *Strom.* VII 111, 1–4. Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker*, 410, ist zu pessimistisch betreffs einer Systematisierung, während er den tendenziösen Charakter von *Strom.* VII übertreibt: „es ist im übrigen nicht einfach, ja fast kaum möglich, ein in sich zusammenhängendes Bild von Clemens als Beter zu entwerfen, weil uns in seinen Werken nur verstreute Andeutungen begegnen, die meist fragmentarischen Charakter tragen. Allein in *Strom.* VII finden sich ausführlichere Darlegungen über das gnostische Beten. Sie sind aber nicht immer klar und vor allem stark tendenziös; sollen sie doch den Nachweis erbringen, dass der heidnische Vorwurf der ἀσέβεια den Christen nicht treffe, da dieser der wahrhaft Fromme sei.“

der Ablehnung von bestimmten Zeiten und Orten, die dem Gebet reserviert werden sollten. Dies würde bedeuten, das Beten als eine gelegentliche, wenn nicht sogar nebensächliche Tätigkeit herabzusetzen. Dagegen soll das ganze Leben vom Gebet durchdrungen sein, wie die Aufforderung „siebenmal am Tag“ zu beten nahelegt. Wenn man die symbolische Deutung von Ps 118 (119), 164 („Siebenmal am Tag singe ich dein Lob, wegen deiner gerechten Entscheide“) versteht, heißt es, das Gebet mit dem Leben zu vereinen und zum ständigen Gespräch mit Gott zu kommen, sowohl auf individueller Ebene als auch in der Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen.²⁹ So ist das Leben des Gnostikers, wie bereits gesagt, ein ununterbrochenes ‚Fest‘, da er unter dem immerwährenden und teilnahmevollen Blick Gottes bleibt und durch seine Lebensführung das Lob Gottes in allen möglichen Situationen spendet.³⁰ In dieser Hinsicht, ohne die sprachlichen und begrifflichen Unterschiede verwischen zu wollen, kommt Clemens doch den Anschauungen eines Tertullians sehr nahe: beide erkennen nämlich das Gebet als strukturellen Bestandteil im Leben des Christen an. Jedoch, nach Ansicht des Alexandriners, gilt all dies wesentlich für die Vollkommenen und nicht für die einfachen Christen. Folglich, obgleich Clemens ähnlich wie Tertullian den Gebrauch von drei ‚kanonischen Gebetsstunden‘ (ὥρας τακτάς) kennt, sollen sie für den Gnostiker nicht wie ein Gesetz gelten, denn er widmet sein ganzes Leben dem Kult Gottes. Auf der anderen Seite, durch die Behauptung dass nicht nur jeder Augenblick, sondern auch jeder Ort (entsprechend 1Tim 2, 8) zum Beten geeignet sind, ignoriert Clemens offenbar die Problematik, die Origenes betreffs des Schlafgemachs der Eheleute in Bezug auf 1Kor 7, 5 aufwirft, ohne sich allerdings die Bevorzugung des Ortes der kirchlichen Versammlung wie sein alexandrinischen Nachfolger zu eigen zu machen.³¹

²⁹ *Strom.* VII 35, 3: "Ὅθεν οὐτε ὠρίσμενον τόπον οὐτε ἐξαίρετον ἱερὸν οὐδὲ μὴν ἑορτάς τινας καὶ ἡμέρας ἀποτεταγμένας, ἀλλὰ τὸν πάντα βίον ὁ γνωστικὸς ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὸν μόνος ὢν τυγχάνῃ καὶ ὅπου τινὰς ἀν τῶν ὁμοίως πεπιστευκότων ἔχῃ, τιμᾷ τὸν θεόν, τοὔτέστιν χάριν ὁμολογεῖ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς πολιτείας. Schon *Strom.* VI 102, 1 führt das Thema des ständigen Gebets des Gnostikers im Geist ein, u. z. durch seine liebende Vertrautheit mit Gott.

³⁰ *Strom.* VII 35, 6: Πάντα τοίνυν τὸν βίον ἑορτὴν ἄγοντες, πάντοθεν παρῆναι τὸν θεὸν πεπεισμένοι, γεωργοῦμεν αἰνοῦντες, πλέομεν ὑμνοῦντες, κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην πολιτείαν ἐντέχνως ἀναστρεφόμεθα. Vgl. auch VII 49, 3: "Ἀπας δὲ ὁ βίος αὐτοῦ πανήγυρις ἀγία. Laut VII 76, 4 wird der Tag, an dem die Gebote befolgt werden, zum „Tag des Herrn“ (κυριακὴ ἡμέρα).

³¹ Zum unterschiedlichen Gewicht von 1Kor 7, 5 in der jeweiligen Rede vom Gebet s. Le Boulluec, *Les réflexions de Clément sur la prière*, 407: „il semble qu'Origène soit enclin à en restreindre l'usage tel que l'exposait Clément, plus attaché, lui, à ce sujet, à défendre la sainteté du mariage“ (mit dem Hinweis auf *Or.* II 2 bzw. XXXI 4 und auf *Strom.* III 79, 1 und 81, 1–82). Vgl. auch II 145, 1, wo Clemens Ehe und Gebet harmonisch vereint: καθαρόν

Nicht anders als Tertullian illustriert Clemens die Durchdringung des gnostischen Alltagslebens durch das Gebet: beginnend bei den ‚Gebeten‘ und ‚Hymnen‘, die den Tagesablauf allgemein bestimmen, bis zu den Schriftlesungen vor den Mahlzeiten, den Psalmen und den Hymnen währenddessen oder den Gebeten vor dem Schlafengehen und denen während der Nacht.³² Wenn Clemens (übrigens wie auch Tertullian), im Unterschied zu Origenes, 1 Thess 5, 17 mit der Aufforderung ständig zu beten nicht kommentiert oder ausdrücklich erwähnt, gelangt er doch praktisch zu derselben Ansicht wie Origenes, wonach das Leben ein einziges grosses Gebet sei, das aus der Verbindung von Gebeten und Taten bestehe.³³ Dennoch fällt der Akzent bei den Formulierungen von Clemens anders aus, insofern er dazu tendiert, dem Gebet sozusagen den Status eines Kontexts oder einer geistigen Atmosphäre einzuräumen statt es der ‚Tat‘ anzugleichen.³⁴ Dies lässt sich allerdings weitgehend auf seine dominierende Auffassung vom Gebet zurückführen.

Wie schon bemerkt, eignet sich Clemens die Definition des Gebets als ὁμιλία, ‚Gespräch‘, ‚Konversation‘ oder ‚Verkehr‘ mit Gott an, auch wenn er zugibt, diese Vorstellung sei gewissermassen ‚gewagt‘.³⁵ Die Bevorzugung

οὖν τὸν γάμον ὥσπερ τι ἱερὸν ἄγαλμα τῶν μαινόντων φυλακτέον, ἀνεγειρομένοις μὲν ἐκ τῶν ὑπνῶν μετὰ κυρίου, ἀπιοῦσι δὲ εἰς ὑπνον μετ’ εὐχαριστίας καὶ εὐχομένοις. Hier empfiehlt er ausdrücklich auch der Frau das Beten nach 1 Tim 5, 5. S. ausserdem III 81, 4: γάμου δὲ τοῦ σώφρονος μεσιτεύει συμφωνία, ἐπὶ τε τὴν εὐχὴν ἐγκρατῶς ἄγουσα.

³² Strom. VII 49, 4: Αὐτίκα θυσαί μὲν αὐτῷ εὐχαί τε καὶ αἶνοι καὶ αἱ πρὸ τῆς ἐστίσεως ἐντεύξεις τῶν γραφῶν, ψαλμοὶ δὲ καὶ ὕμνοι παρὰ τὴν ἐστίαν πρὸ τε τῆς κοίτης, ἀλλὰ καὶ νύκτωρ εὐχαὶ πάλιν.

³³ Nach Le Boulluec erwähnt Clemens indirekt die Paulusstelle in Strom. VII 35, 4: ὁ συνπαρὼν αἰ διὰ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ἀδιαλείπτως τῷ θεῷ. Pini (*Clemente di Alessandria. Gli Stromati, Note di vera filosofia*, 503 Anm. 9) sieht seinerseits eine Anspielung in V 16, 7, wo das Gebet der πίστις bei der ζήτησις zu Hilfe kommt: ἐνδεδεχεία δὲ ὀρθοῦ βίου ἀδιαλείπτως τε εὐχαῖς ἐκβιάζεσθαι (Mt 11, 12) εἴρηνται.

³⁴ Vgl. Strom. VII 49, 7: ὁ δὲ καὶ περιπάτῳ χρώμενος καὶ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡσυχία καὶ ἀναγνώσει καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς κατὰ λόγον πάντα τρόπον εὐχεταί. Jedoch, IV 171, 2 tendiert praktisch dazu, ‚Gebet‘ und ‚Tat‘ zu assimilieren.

³⁵ Strom. VII 39, 6: Ἔστιν οὖν, ὡς εἰπεῖν τολμηρότερον, ὁμιλία πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἢ εὐχή· κἂν ψιθυρίζοντες ἄρα μὴδὲ τὰ χεῖλη ἀνοίγοντες μετὰ σιγῆς προσλαλῶμεν, ἔνδοθεν κεκράγαμεν· πᾶσαν γὰρ τὴν ἐνδιάθετον ὁμιλίαν ὁ θεὸς ἀδιαλείπτως ἐπαίει. Das Verb ὁμιλεῖν bezieht sich auf eine lehrende Tätigkeit in *Paed.* III 87, 1; *Strom.* I 6, 1; sonst weist es auf den sexuellen Verkehr hin (z.B. *Strom.* II 118, 2), wie häufig auch das Substantiv ὁμιλία (z.B. *Strom.* II 88, 4; III 82, 6; 104, 1: τὴν ἀνδρὸς κατὰ γάμον πρὸς γυναῖκα ὁμιλίαν). Aus diesem Grund lässt sich vielleicht die Rücksicht des Clemens erklären. Allerdings beschreibt *Strom.* IV 40, 1 selbst die mystische Schau mit Hilfe von ὁμιλεῖν: ὅταν τοίνυν ἐνδιατρίψῃ τῇ θεωρίᾳ, τῷ θεῷ καθαρῶς ὁμιλῶν, ὁ γνωστικὸς μετέχων τῆς ἁγίας ποιότητος, προσεχέστερον ἐν ἔξει γίνεται ταυτότητος ἀπαθοῦς, ὡς μηκέτι ἐπιστήμην ἔχειν καὶ γνῶσιν κεκτῆσθαι, ἐπιστήμην δὲ εἶναι καὶ γνῶσιν.

einer solchen Definition offenbart einen nicht zu unterschätzenden Unterschied zu dem Ansatz des Origenes, der das Wort fast niemals gebraucht und den Begriff, wenn überhaupt, mit anderen Mitteln ausdrückt. Dagegen betrachtet Clemens als das Ziel des Vollkommenheitsideals, zur Vertrautheit der Zwiesprache mit Gott zu gelangen, wobei das Gebet sich in erster Linie als Lob und Danksagung gestalten soll. Bei ihm spielt demnach das Gebet als Bitte (αἵτησις oder προσευχή) nur eine untergeordnete Rolle. Deshalb entfaltet sich das Leben des Gnostikers an jedem Ort und in jeder Zeit im Zeichen der Dankbarkeit für die von Gott geschenkte Gnosis und das darauf gegründete Leben in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft.³⁶ Nichtsdestoweniger erkennt Clemens die Legitimität des Gebets als Bitte an, u. z. als er gegen die Thesen des Häretikers Prodikos polemisiert, auch wenn er es mit der geistigen Lage des Vollkommenen verbindet, was Inhalt und Form angeht. Laut seinem Bericht hätte jener Vertreter der häretischen Gnosis behauptet, dass man „nicht beten sollte,“ und somit die Ansicht des Maximus von Tyrus wiederholt. Aber wir können uns kein genaues Bild von solchen Vorstellungen machen, weil Clemens einerseits Prodikos mit den Cyrenäern in Zusammenhang bringt, andererseits die Widerlegung auf eine spätere Gelegenheit verschiebt.³⁷ In Anbetracht der spärlichen Nachrichten ist es wenig angebracht, nicht nur eine direkte Beziehung zwischen Prodikos und Maximus von Tyrus anzunehmen, sondern auch in Prodikos und seinem Kreis die Anhänger der Thesen zu sehen, die Origenes in Περὶ εὐχῆς bekämpft. Auf jeden Fall, bemüht Clemens sich, die Bedingungen genau festzulegen, unter denen das Bittgebet bei Gott annehmbar ist und von ihm erhört wird.

³⁶ *Strom.* VII 35, 3: τὸν πάντα βίον ὁ γνωστικὸς ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ... χάριν ὁμολογεῖ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς πολιτείας. Vgl. auch VII 79, 2: Τὸ δὲ εἶδος αὐτὸ τῆς εὐχῆς εὐχαριστία ἐπὶ τε τοῖς προγεγονόσιν ἐπὶ τε τοῖς ἐνεστώσι ἐπὶ τε τοῖς μέλλουσιν, ὡς ἤδη διὰ τὴν πίστιν παροῦσιν· τούτου δὲ ἡγίεται τὸ εἰληφέναι τὴν γνώσιν (s. ausserdem besonders VI 114, 3). IV 148, 2 bietet ein schönes Beispiel dieser Art vom Beten an: Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐμέ λύσομαι τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, διὰ τὴν πρὸς σέ οικείωσιν, κύριε. καλὴ γὰρ ἡ κτισθεῖσα δὴ οἰκονομία καὶ πάντα εὖ διοικεῖται, οὐδὲν ἀναίτιως γίνεται, ἐν τοῖς σοῖς εἶναι με δεῖ, παντοκράτορ· κἂν ἐνταῦθα ὦ, παρὰ σοῖ εἰμι· ἀδεῆς δ' εἶναι θέλω, ἵνα σοῖ συνεγγίξωιν δυνηθῶ, καὶ ὀλίγοις ἀρκεῖσθαι, μελετῶν τὴν σὴν ἐκλογὴν τὴν δικαίαν τῶν καλῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ὁμοίων. Dagegen formuliert Clemens in IV 172, 2 einen Wunsch, der dem Bittgebet eher entspricht: ἐγὼ δὲ ἂν εὐξαίμην τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ πετρώσαι με εἰς τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ τὴν ἐμήν.

³⁷ *Strom.* VII 41, 1: Ἐνταῦθα γενόμενος ὑπεμνήσθην τῶν περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν εὐχέσθαι πρὸς τινων ἑτεροδόξων, τούτεστιν τῶν ἀμφὶ τὴν Προδίκου αἵρεσιν, παρεισαγομένων δογμάτων. Nach Eric Segelberg, „Prayer among the Gnostics? The Evidence of Some Nag Hammadi Documents,“ in M. Krause (ed.), *Gnosis and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 55, war vermutlich Prodikos ein Anhänger der valentinianischen Naturenlehre, die als solche die Notwendigkeit des Gebets überflüssig gemacht hätte.

4. DIE STELLE DES BITTGEBETS

Beim ‚wahren Gnostiker‘ ist die Bitte (αἵτησις) mit dem Dankgebet (εὐχαριστία) verbunden, und sie findet ihren Ausdruck in der Fürbitte für die Erlösung anderer Menschen.³⁸ Im allgemeinen ist die Bitte unter der Bedingung zugelassen, dass sie auf die Erreichung geistiger Güter zielt, die der Seele von Nutzen sind. Tertullian und auf noch exklusivere Weise Origenes teilen hier die Ansichten von Clemens, obwohl die Akzente bei den beiden Autoren anders sind. Der Gnostiker betet nicht, um Güter zu bekommen, die für ihn irgendwie äußerlich bleiben, sondern um selbst gut zu werden, wobei er durch sein Bemühen dazu beiträgt, ein solches Ziel zu erreichen.³⁹ Der Einfluss der philosophischen Vorstellungen vom Gebet (wie sie, zum Beispiel, von Pythagoras aber auch von den Stoikern formuliert wurden) lässt sich deutlich spüren, wenn Clemens behauptet, dass vor allem diejenigen imstande sind Gott Bitten vorzutragen, welche den richtigen Begriff von ihm pflegen und wissen, was sich nach ihm geziemt, während sie sich gleichzeitig anstrengen, durch die Tugend gottähnlich zu werden.⁴⁰

Auf diese Weise formuliert Clemens positiv das doppelte Motiv: *worum* und *wie* wir beten sollen, was bei Origenes vor allem im Licht von Röm 8, 26 eine grosse Rolle spielen wird. Anders als bei seinem alexandrinischen Nachfolger, wie schon angedeutet, verrät die clementinische Perspektive keine Schwierigkeit diesbezüglich, denn der wahre Gnostiker wisse sehr gut Bescheid, wie man sich beim Vortragen der Bitten an Gott verhalten soll. Es sieht sogar so aus, als ob bei so einem Ansatz das Bewusstsein kaum vorhanden ist, dass das Bittgebet immer unvermeidlich bleibt, u. z. als eine Notwendigkeit, der der Mensch nie entgehen kann. Dagegen tritt der Gnostiker des Clemens wie einer auf, der eigentlich schon besitzt, worum er für Andere betet; oder er betet, um das Gute zu behalten und zu vermehren, was er schon besitzt.

³⁸ Strom. VII 41, 6: Αὐτίκα ἢ τε εὐχαριστία ἢ τε τῶν πέλας εἰς ἐπιστροφὴν αἵτησις ἔργον ἐστὶ τοῦ γνωστικοῦ. Auch IV 136, 1 bezeichnet die „Erlösung der Menschen“ als die eigentliche Bitte des vollkommenen Christen, während er selbst sich nur nach der Gnosis sehnt: αἵτημα τὸ βασιλικώτατον διδάσκων αἰτεῖσθαι τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν ἀμισθί. Vgl. besonders VI 77, 4: πρὸς τοῖσδε παμπόλους ὥς ὅτι μάλιστα ὁμοίους αὐτῷ γενέσθαι εὖζεται.

³⁹ Strom. VII 38, 4: Ἄει τοίνυν ὁ γνωστικὸς τὴν εὐχὴν καὶ τὴν αἵτησιν τῶν ὄντως ἀγαθῶν τῶν περὶ ψυχῆς ποιεῖται, καὶ εὖχεται συνεργῶν ἅμα καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς ἕξιν ἀγαθότητος ἐλθεῖν, ὥς μηκέτι ἔχειν τὰ ἀγαθὰ καθάπερ μαθήματά τινα παρακείμενα, εἶναι δὲ ἀγαθόν; 44, 3: τὰ δὲ ὄντως ἀγαθὰ τὰ περὶ ψυχὴν εὖχεται εἶναι τε αὐτῷ καὶ παραμεῖναι.

⁴⁰ Strom. VII 39, 1: Διὸ καὶ τούτοις μάλιστα προσήκει εὖχεσθαι τοῖς εἰδόσι τε τὸ θεῖον ὥς χρὴ καὶ τὴν πρόσφορον ἀρετὴν ἔχουσιν αὐτῷ, οἱ ἴσασι τίνα τὰ ὄντως ἀγαθὰ καὶ τίνα αἰτητέον καὶ πότε καὶ πῶς ἕκαστα.

Der Vergleich mit den ‚bösen‘ (μοχθεροί) Betern hilft zusätzlich, den privilegierten Zustand des Gnostikers in den Augen des Clemens zu betonen: solche Beter bitten Gott darum, etwas zu erlangen, was sie nicht besitzen; sie beten für etwas, was ihnen gut erscheint, aber in Wirklichkeit nicht so ist, weil sie nicht imstande sind, das Gute zu erkennen.⁴¹ Im Gegensatz dazu ist der Gnostiker ‚selbstgenügend‘ und bedarf nicht der Anderen, sodass er nicht einmal „das Verlangen nach den fehlenden Dingen empfindet, sondern er begnügt sich mit den anwesenden.“ Ihm „mangelt es nicht an den ihm geziemenden Gütern, da er schon durch die Gnade und die göttliche Erkenntnis dazu befähigt wurde.“⁴² Da er eine solche geistige Höhe erreicht hat, kümmert er sich gar nicht darum, von Gott irdische Güter zu bekommen, wie es der ‚gemeine Mensch‘ tut.⁴³ Nichtsdestoweniger, der clementinische Optimismus bezüglich des vollkommenen Christen ist nicht so blind, nicht einzusehen, dass auch dieser fallen kann, wie es sogar mit den Engeln geschehen ist. Aus diesem Grund läßt auch der Gnostiker nicht nach, sich im Gebet Gott anzuvertrauen und ihn darum zu bitten, nicht von einem Lebensweg in der Tugend abzukommen.⁴⁴

Die Sicht des Clemens unterscheidet sich noch einmal von der des Origenes dadurch, dass sie auf den ersten Blick dem Gebet des Sünders keinem Raum gewährt, obwohl der Alexandriner auch mit der Tatsache rechnen muß, dass Gott die Gebete sündiger Menschen erhören kann. Nach seinem Ansatz, der erneut an die philosophische Schau vom Gebet (hier speziell bei Plato) denken läßt, muss der Beter, der sich auf das Gespräch mit Gott vorbereitet, eine ganz reine Seele besitzen: er muß nämlich ‚vollkommen gut‘ sein oder sich mindestens von seinen bösen Taten ganz und gar entfernt haben.⁴⁵ Vermutlich erklärt die Optik eines schon vollkommenen und

⁴¹ *Strom.* VII 44, 2: Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἃ οὐκ ἔχουσι εὐχονται κτήσασθαι, καὶ τὰ δοκοῦντα ἀγαθὰ, οὐ τὰ ὄντα, αἰτοῦνται. Nach VI 112, 4, sind diejenigen, die nicht recht handeln, nicht imstande, richtig zu beten, denn sie kennen nicht, was wirklich gut ist.

⁴² *Strom.* VII 44, 4–5: Ταύτη οὐδὲ ὁρέγεταιίς τινος τῶν ἀπόντων, ἀρκούμενος τοῖς παρούσιν. Οὐ γὰρ ἐλλιπὴς τῶν οἰκείων ἀγαθῶν, ἱκανὸς ὢν ἤδη ἑαυτῷ, ἐκ τῆς θείας χάριτος τε καὶ γνώσεως· ἀλλὰ αὐτάρκειας μὲν γεγόμενος ἀνευδής τε τῶν ἄλλων, τὸ παντοκρατορικὸν δὲ βούλημα ἐγνωκώς, καὶ ἔχων ἅμα καὶ εὐχόμενος. Vgl. VI 77, 3: οὐδὲ εὐξεται τυχεῖν τῶν τῆδε ὁ τεύξεσθαι πεπεισμένος τῶν ὄντων ἀγαθῶν, ἔχουσθαι δὲ αἰεὶ τῆς ἐπιβόλου καὶ κατορθωτικῆς πίστεως.

⁴³ *Strom.* VII 46, 4: Κορυφαίος δ' ἤδη ὁ γνωστικός θεωρίαν εὐχεται αὔξειν τε καὶ παραμένειν, καθάπερ ὁ κοινὸς ἄνθρωπος τὸ συνεχὲς ὑγιαίνειν. Vgl. V 97, 2 mit der Auslegung des Gebets des Sokrates im *Phaedrus*: seine Bitte vereinigt das erste und das zweite Gebot.

⁴⁴ *Strom.* VII 46, 5: Ναὶ μὴν μηδὲ ἀποπεσεῖν ποτε τῆς ἀρετῆς αἰτήσεται, συνεργῶν μάλιστα πρὸς τὸ ἅπτως διαγενέσθαι. Vgl. *Strom.* VII 79, 3: Καὶ δὴ καὶ αἰτεῖται οὕτως ζῆσαι τὸν ὠρισμένον ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ βίον, ὡς γνωστικός, ὡς ἄσκαρος, καὶ τυχεῖν μὲν τῶν ἀρίστων, φυγεῖν δὲ τὰ χείρονα.

⁴⁵ *Strom.* VII 49, 1: Διὸ καὶ ἀχραντον τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχειν χρὴ καὶ ἀμίαντον εἰλικρινῶς τὸν προσομιλοῦντα τῷ θεῷ, μάλιστα μὲν ἀγαθὸν τελῶς ἑαυτὸν ἐξειργασμένον, εἰ δὲ μή, κἂν προκόπτοντα ἐπὶ

als solchen tugendhaften Beters die Tatsache, dass Clemens auf die seelischen Bedingungen nicht eingeht, die dem Akt des Betens vorangehen sollen. Diese rufen dagegen die Empfehlungen von Tertullian, Origenes oder Evagrius betreffs der Vergebung und der brüderlichen Versöhnung hervor. Vielmehr, der Gnostiker bittet um den Erlass der Schulden von den Anderen und um den Gewinn der Erkenntnis.⁴⁶ Immerhin ist es interessant festzustellen, dass das einzige Zitat vom ‚Vaterunser‘ sich gerade auf die fünfte Bitte als Ausdruck der ἀμνησικακία bezieht.⁴⁷

Clemens hegt auch kein besonderes Interesse, die äußeren Umstände des Betens zu vertiefen, wie es vor allem bei Tertullian der Fall ist. Wahrscheinlich ist dies noch darauf zurückzuführen, dass der Alexandriner das Gebet vor allem als ὁμιλία betrachtet. Er bietet trotzdem ein wenn auch flüchtig gezeichnetes Bild vom Beter, das den Hang zur Spiritualisierung symbolisch widerspiegelt, welcher seine Anschauungen kennzeichnet.⁴⁸ Auch Clemens stellt ihn mit dem nach oben gerichteten Haupt und den ausgestreckten Armen zum Himmel dar, wie im traditionellen Bild des Beters üblich war. Er fügt aber ein originelles Detail hinzu, um dadurch auf den spirituellen Aufstieg deutlicher hinzuweisen, der beim Gebet stattfindet: der Beter erhebt sich auf die Fußspitzen während der Akklamation, die beim Gebetsschluß

τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ ἐφιέμενον αὐτῆς, τῶν δὲ τῆς κακίας ἔργων τέλεον ἀπεσπασμένον. Jedoch *Strom.* VI 102, 1 erwägt die Bitte um Vergebung der Sünden im Aufstieg zur Vollkommenheit: Εὐχεται τοῖνυν ὁ γνωστικός καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἔννοιαν πᾶσαν τὴν ὥραν, δι' ἀγάπης οἰκειούμενος τῷ θεῷ. Καὶ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν αἰτήσεται, μετὰ δὲ τὸ μηκέτι ἁμαρτάνειν ἐπὶ τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν δύνασθαι καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν κατὰ τὸν κύριον δημιουργίαν τε καὶ οἰκονομίαν συνιέναι, ἵνα δὴ, καθαρὸς τὴν καρδίαν γενόμενος, δι' ἐπιγνώσεως τῆς διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον τὴν μακαρίαν θεὸν μυηθῇ. Laut *Strom.* II 57, 3 gleicht die sich wiederholende Umkehr nach dem Begehen von Sünden dem Zustand der Ungläubigen, sodass II 59, 1 die häufige Bitte um Vergebung kritisiert: δόκησις τοῖνυν μετανόιας, οὐ μετάνοια, τὸ πολλάκις αἰτεῖσθαι συγγνώμην ἐφ' οἷς πλημμελοῦμεν πολλάκις.

⁴⁶ *Strom.* VII 79, 4: Αἰτεῖται δὲ καὶ ἐπικουρισμὸν περὶ ὧν ἡμαρτήσαμεν ἡμεῖς καὶ ἐπιστροφήν εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν.

⁴⁷ *Strom.* VII 81, 1: Οὐδέποτε τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν ἁμαρτησάντων μέμνηται, ἀλλὰ ἀφήσι. Διὸ καὶ δικαίως εὐχεται, ἄφες ἡμῖν λέγων· καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀφίμεν (Lk 11, 4 par. Mt 6, 12). Brown, *The Lord's Prayer through North African Eyes*, 124, ignoriert diese Stelle sowie die anderen Anspielungen und begnügt sich mit der Bemerkung: „This language recalls the doctrine of God's πρόνοια“ (S. 152).

⁴⁸ Emmanuel von Severus, „Gebet I,“ *RAC* 8, 1216, weist hierzu auf die Entsprechung zwischen innerer und äußerer Haltung beim Betenden hin: „Wenn wir auch von Clemens von Alexandrien kaum Proben wirklichen Betens erhalten, ... so verdanken wir ihm doch einen wichtigen Hinweis auf die Einheit inneren Betens und äußerer Gebetshaltung, der für die Gebetsgebärde charakteristisch ist.“ *Strom.* IV 141, 4–142, 3 erinnert an die griechische bzw. jüdische Sitte, sich vor dem Gebet Waschungen zu unterziehen, ohne ein entsprechendes Benehmen den Christen zu empfehlen.

ausgesprochen wird.⁴⁹ Sonst schweigt Clemens über andere Gebetsgesten, wie das Knien oder das Kreuzeszeichen.⁵⁰ Er präzisiert allerdings die Richtung: der Christ betet zum Osten hin, zur aufgehenden Sonne gerichtet – was symbolisch das Licht Christi meint, das die ganze Welt beleuchtet. Dieselbe Haltung soll der Beter auch bei Sonnenuntergang einnehmen.⁵¹

Statt sich mit den inneren oder äußeren Bedingungen des Betens zu befassen, privilegiert Clemens das Motiv des schweigsamen Gebets. Dies ist zwar Origenes und auch Tertullian gar nicht unbekannt, gewinnt aber bei Clemens einen besonderen Stellenwert. Offenbar handelt es sich hier um die unmittelbarste Konsequenz seiner Sicht vom Gebet als ὁμιλία, ‚Gespräch‘ bzw. ‚Verkehr‘ mit Gott. Die Bevorzugung des schweigsamen Gebets vor dem laut gesprochenen wird schon auf anthropologischer Ebene damit begründet, dass die intellektuelle Komponente in der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung des Hörens von Clemens besonders bewertet wird. Dies gilt umso mehr für Gott, denn er erkennt die Gedanken der Menschen, noch bevor sie durch die Stimme geäußert werden: er versteht sie ohne irgendeinen sinnlichen Ausdruck, weil Gott „ganz Ohr und Auge“ ist.⁵² Deshalb, auch wenn

⁴⁹ *Strom.* VII 40, 1: Ταύτη καὶ προσανατείνομεν τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὰς χεῖρας εἰς οὐρανὸν αἵρομεν τοὺς τε πόδας ἐπεγείρομεν κατὰ τὴν τελευταίαν τῆς εὐχῆς συνεκφώνησιν, ἐπακολουθοῦντες τῇ προθυμίᾳ τοῦ πνεύματος εἰς τὴν νοητὴν οὐσίαν, καί, συναναφιστάνειν τῷ λόγῳ τὸ σῶμα τῆς γῆς πειρώμενοι, μετάρσιον ποιησάμενοι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπτερωμένην τῷ πόθῳ τῶν κρειττόνων, ἐπὶ τὰ ἅγια χωρεῖν βιαζόμεθα, τοῦ δεσμοῦ καταμεγαλοφρονοῦντες τοῦ σαρκικοῦ. Severus, *Gebet*, 1216, bemerkt dazu: „Während Clemens hier von platonischen Gedankengängen beeinflusst ist, finden sich die gleichen Anschauungen bei Origenes ohne diese Bezugnahme.“ Jedoch, die dargebotene Motivierung zur Gebärde des Betenden, die auf das platonische Motiv vom Seelenflug anspielt, legt eine Verwandtschaft mit Origenes, *Cels.* VII 44 nahe. *Strom.* VI 28, 5 zeigt die Geste der emporgehobenen Hände bei Aiakos: τὰς καθαρὰς χεῖρας ἐκτείνας εἰς οὐρανόν. Vgl. auch *Paed.* I 16, 3, wo Clemens ein anonymes Fragment zitiert: ὁλίγῳ ποδὶ ἐφαπτόμενοι τῆς γῆς, ὅσον ἐν κόσμῳ εἶναι δοκεῖν.

⁵⁰ Vgl. Severus, „Gebet“, 1217.

⁵¹ *Strom.* VII 43, 6: Ἐπεὶ δὲ γενεθλίου ἡμέρας εἰκὼν ἢ ἀνατολὴ κάκειθεν τὸ φῶς αὖξεται ἐκ σκότους λάμψαν τὸ πρῶτον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ καλινδομένοις ἀντέειλεν γνώσεως ἀληθείας ἡμέρα κατὰ λόγον τοῦ ἡλίου, πρὸς τὴν ἑωθινὴν ἀνατολὴν αἱ εὐχαί. Martin Wallraff, „Christus Verus Sol.“ Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike“ (Münster: Aschendorff, 2001), 63f., stellt den folgenden Unterschied zwischen Clemens und Origenes fest: „Während Klemens bei seiner Deutung keinen spezifisch christlichen Aspekt zur Erklärung der Gebetsostung herausarbeitet, begegnet bei Origenes wenig später zum ersten Mal der Versuch, sowohl Abgrenzung als auch Anknüpfung an pagane Bräuche durch das Motiv der Überbietung zusammenzuführen.“ Das Zitat aus Ps 140 (141), 2 weist übrigens auf die Richtung nach Osten beim Abendgebet hin (vgl. unten Anm. 64).

⁵² *Strom.* VII 36, 5–37, 6. Nach Alain Le Boulluec, „Clément d'Alexandrie et la conversion du ‚parler grec‘“, in *Alexandrie antique et chrétienne*, 76–78, erwägt somit Clemens „la possibilité pour l'homme de converser avec Dieu à l'image du dialogue entre les anges, lui-même

unser Gebet im Gemurmel oder im Schweigen geschieht, entfaltet es sich innerlich, als ob es sich um ein ‚Geschrei‘ handeln würde, das Gott ununterbrochen hört.⁵³ Auch an diesem Punkt lassen sich erneut Unterschiede und Ähnlichkeiten mit Origenes messen: die Betonung des schweigsamen Gebets ist zweifellos Clemens eigen, aber seine Vorstellung vom schweigsamen Gebet als einem inneren ‚Schrei‘ bereitet praktisch das Schema vor, mit Hilfe dessen Origenes das Motiv erarbeiten wird. Bei ihm wird allerdings der Geist zum Protagonisten des inneren ‚Schreis‘, insofern er in den Heiligen betet, während bei Clemens die ‚pneumatologische‘ Komponente nicht so deutlich zum Durchbruch kommt. Sie scheint nämlich in den anthropologisch-geistigen Aspekt einzugehen, u.z. in die ‚pneumatische‘ Spannung (τὸ πνευματικόν), die darauf bedacht ist, die ‚noetische Stimme‘ bei einer ganzheitlichen Umkehr des Intellekts zu Gott hin zum Ausdruck zu bringen.⁵⁴ Nichtsdestoweniger, die Anspielung auf Röm 8, 26 scheint doch nahelegend zu sein, wie wir später bei einer weiteren Analyse der Schriftstellen bei Clemens sehen werden.

Zuvor müssen wir noch einen zentralen Aspekt in der Sicht des Clemens heranziehen, der ihn ohne weiteres sowohl mit Tertullian als auch mit Origenes verwandt macht, ohne damit seinen ihm eigenen Ansatz zu sehr zu relativieren. Es geht um die Effektivität des Gebets, die von der philosophischen und der häretischen Kritik in Frage gestellt wurde. Clemens illustriert sie mit den Thesen des Prodikos, gegen die er kämpft. Nun, seine Meinung diesbezüglich kommt fast einer Form von Automatismus nahe, weil der Gnostiker, aufgrund seines von den Tugenden geprägten Zustands und seines spirituellen Gebets, sicher ist, dass er von Gott erhört wird.⁵⁵ Hier sieht sich Clemens dazu gezwungen, unter gegensätzlichem Druck eine Kompromisslösung zu finden. Einerseits ist der vollkommene

représenté d'après le modèle de l'entretien du ‚sage‘ avec le ‚démon‘ et des ‚démons‘ entre eux“ (S. 76).

⁵³ *Strom.* VII 39, 6 (s. Anm. 35).

⁵⁴ *Strom.* VII 43, 5: "Ἐξεστι οὖν μηδὲ φωνῇ τὴν εὐχὴν παραπέμειν, συντείνοντα μόνον ἔνδοθεν τὸ πνευματικὸν πᾶν εἰς φωνὴν τὴν νοητὴν κατὰ τὴν ἀπερίσπαστον πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐπιστροφὴν. Hierzu spricht Le Boulluec, „Clément d'Alexandrie et la conversion du ‚parler grec‘“, 78 vom Gebet als „cet entretien spirituel, d'intellect à intellect ... Une telle communication donne un avant-goût, dans le monde du devenir, de l'expérience promise pour la fin des temps.“ *Strom.* III 78, 5 nimmt allerdings Röm 8, 9–10, 12–15 wieder auf, um die Gabe des Geistes beim Beten zum Vater ‚gnostisch‘ auszuwerten: εἰς τοῦτο ἐλάβομεν, ἵνα γινώσκομεν τοῦτον ᾧ προσευχόμεθα, τὸν τῷ ὄντι πατέρα.

⁵⁵ *Strom.* VII 41, 4: "Ὡσπερ γὰρ πᾶν ὃ βούλεται, δύναται ὁ θεός, οὕτως πᾶν ὃ ἀν αἰτήσῃ, ὁ γνωστικός λαμβάνει.

Christ dazu bereit, nichts zu bekommen oder der göttlichen Vorsehung zu überlassen, welche Güter er empfangen soll, die ihm nötig sind. Vielmehr, er kann sogar darauf verzichten, die Bitte auszusprechen oder, wenn überhaupt, sie nur in Gedanken formulieren, dem Beispiel von Hannah folgend, das Clemens schon in *Strom.* VI erwähnt hatte.⁵⁶ Andererseits, ohne die Notwendigkeit des Bittgebets damit abzuschaffen, ermutigt Clemens die Bitte zugunsten von Anderen. Auch in dieser Hinsicht manifestieren sich auf jeden Fall die weitgreifenden Folgen, die Clemens' Vorstellung vom Gebet als ὁμιλία mit sich bringt. Denn, wo man im ständigen Verkehr mit Gott ist, besteht keine Notwendigkeit, ihn zu bitten: die geistige Reinheit des Gnostikers genügt schon an sich, damit seine Bitte erhört wird; übrigens, was ihm nützlich ist, bekommt er sogleich.⁵⁷ Clemens kann aber dem Einwand nicht entgehen, auch die Sünder würden manchmal von Gott erhört. Er antwortet darauf, dass dies nur selten geschehe und dazu diene, Anderen zu Hilfe zu kommen. In solchen Fällen sollte man die Gabe nicht auf die Person des Beters sondern auf den Plan der göttlichen Vorsehung beziehen.⁵⁸ Was als Voraussetzung und Hauptfaktor für die Erhörung entscheidend bleibt, ist für Clemens das Prinzip eines Beters, der ‚würdig‘ ist zu empfangen, auch wenn er seine Bitte nicht ausdrücklich vorträgt.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Nach Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*, 146 Anm. 1, „la prière parfaite, du gnostique, est celle qui se fait non plus par demande, mais en pensée (*Strom.* VI 12,101,3), par le moyen de l'amour qui apparente à Dieu (cf. *Strom.* VI 12,102,1; 9,77,2f.).“ Vgl. *Strom.* VI 78, 1: τούτου φωνὴν κατὰ τὴν εὐχὴν οὐκ ἀναμένει κύριος, αἰτῆσαι λέγων καὶ ποιῶν· ἐννοήθητι καὶ δώσω; VI 101, 4: Αὐτίκα τῇ Ἀννῇ ἐννοθήσει μόνον τοῦ παιδὸς ἐδόθη σύλληψις τοῦ Σαμουήλ. Αἰτῆσαι, φησὶν ἡ γραφή, καὶ ποιῶν· ἐννοήθητι καὶ δώσω (der Herausgeber weist hier auf 3 Kön 12, 24d LXX oder Mt 7, 7).

⁵⁷ *Strom.* VII 73, 1–2: Ὁ μὲν οὖν γνωστικός δι' ὑπερβολὴν ὁσιότητος αἰτούμενος μᾶλλον ἀποτυχεῖν ἔτοιμος ἢ μὴ αἰτούμενος τυχεῖν. Εὐχὴ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὁ βίος ἅπας καὶ ὁμιλία πρὸς θεόν, κἂν καθαρὸς ἢ ἁμαρτημάτων, πάντως οὐ βούλεται τεύξεσθαι. Λέγει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῷ δικαίῳ· Αἰτῆσαι, καὶ δώσω σοί· ἐννοήθητι, καὶ ποιῶν. Ἐὰν μὲν οὖν συμφέροντα ἦ, παραχρῆμα λήψεται· ἀσύμφορα οὐδέποτε αἰτῆσεται, διὸ οὐδὲ λήψεται. Οὕτως ἔσται ὁ βούλεται. Der Hinweis auf Mt 7, 7 wird hier im *agrapton* 14 Resch subsumiert.

⁵⁸ *Strom.* VII 73, 3–4: Κἂν τις ἡμῖν λέγῃ ἐπιτυχᾶναι τινὰς τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν κατὰ τὰς αἰτήσεις, σπανίως μὲν τοῦτο διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαίαν ἀγαθότητα, δίδοται δὲ τοῖς καὶ ἄλλους εὐεργετεῖν δυναμένοις. Ὅθεν οὐ διὰ τὸν αἰτήσαντα ἡ δόσις γίνεται, ἀλλ' ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ σώζεσθαι δι' αὐτοῦ μέλλοντα προορωμένη δικαίαν πάλιν ποιεῖται τὴν δωρεάν.

⁵⁹ *Strom.* VII 73, 4: Τοῖς δ' ὅσοι ἄξιοι τὰ ὄντως ἀγαθὰ καὶ μὴ αἰτούμενοις δίδοται.

5. ZUM ABSCHLUSS:

UNTERSCHIEDLICHE PARADIGMEN, GEMEINSAME SCHRIFTSTELLEN

Abschließend darf man feststellen, dass auch im Falle von Clemens die Rede vom Gebet von einer Geschlossenheit geprägt ist, die auf ein ‚starkes‘ Denken zurückgeht. Dieses erweist sich allerdings, im Vergleich nicht nur mit Tertullian sondern selbst mit dem ‚Schüler‘ Origenes, anders orientiert. Zwar stellt auch Clemens einen ‚würdigen‘ bzw. ‚heiligen‘ Beter dar – wie es tendentiell in der Gebetsschrift des Origenes der Fall ist –, aber letzten Endes kommt er zu einem verschiedenen Ergebnis. Mindestens ist man geneigt, einen andersartigen Ton als die dominierende Note zu empfinden. Bei Clemens ist nämlich der Grundton eher optimistisch, was die Möglichkeit des Gebets, seine tatsächliche Verwirklichung in der *oratio continua* als Lebensform des Gnostikers sowie seine unvermeidliche Effektivität angeht.⁶⁰ Im Denken von Clemens fehlt ganz und gar jenes problematische bzw. dramatische Register oder, anders und vielleicht besser gesagt, jene „wunderbare Gefühlsstärke“, die nach Walther Völker Origenes’ Auffassung vom Gebet kennzeichnet. Es ist deshalb durchaus naheliegend, daraus zu entnehmen, dass Origenes die Abhandlung seines Vorgängers absichtlich revidiert hat.⁶¹

Dennoch, es wäre ganz und gar verfehlt, das Denken von Clemens als philosophisch ‚kontaminiert‘ anzusehen. Einerseits, von seinem apologetischen Anliegen ausgehend, bemüht er sich grundsätzlich, wie oben bemerkt, die aus der Philosophie entnommenen Motive christlich auszulegen. Andererseits findet das von Clemens entworfene Vollkommenheitsideal seine Verwurzelung im Kontext der Kirche und bei näherem Hinsehen verrät es seine biblischen Grundlagen, wie es teilweise schon gezeigt wurde.⁶²

⁶⁰ Nicht zufällig bemerkt Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker*, 421, die Tendenz, den Gnostiker mit dem stoischen Weisen zu assimilieren, während Origenes seiner Meinung nach der Schrift eher treu bleibt: „Origenes lenkt hier entschlossen zu biblischen Vorstellungen zurück. Er ist davon fest überzeugt, dass alles innere Wachsen stets durch die Versuchung bedroht ist, die sich ebenfalls steigert, er verlangt vom Vollkommenen eine ständige Bußstimmung.“

⁶¹ Le Boulluec, *Les réflexions de Clément sur la prière*, hat wie gewohnt diesen Schluß meisterhaft gezogen. Seinerseits behauptete Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker*, 411, dass Clemens „in manchen Zügen origenistische Anschauungen vorwegnimmt, wenn sie auch dessen inneren Reichtum, Glut und Innigkeit bei weitem nicht erreicht und, verglichen mit dessen wunderbarer Gefühlsstärke, fast kalt und trocken wirkt.“

⁶² Nach Eric G. Jay (*Origen's Treatise on Prayer. Translation and Notes with an Account of the Practice and Doctrine of Prayer from New Testament Times to Origen*, London: Wipf & Stock, 1954), 34, „in spite of the tendency towards an intellectual mysticism in Clement's

Um die am Anfang von *Strom.* VII beanspruchte ‚Inspirierung‘ seines Denkens durch die Schrift zu bestätigen, hat Clemens einige bedeutende Spuren nicht verborgen, indem auch er ein Bündel von Zitaten zusammenbrachte, das weitgehend dem der urchristlichen Rede vom Gebet entsprach. So beruft sich auch Clemens auf die Idee der göttlichen Allwissenheit anhand der Geschichte der Susannah (Sus 42 = Dan 13, 42), die unter den *testimonia* der Gegner des Gebets in der Schrift des Origenes (*Or.* V 2) erscheint.⁶³ Paradoxiertweise schließt sich Clemens einigermaßen ihren Thesen an, indem er die Stelle zugunsten des schweigsamen Gebets heranzieht: es ist nicht nötig, dem allwissenden Gott eine Bitte vorzutragen. Im Unterschied dazu verknüpft Origenes die Perspektive der göttlichen Allwissenheit mit der ausdrücklichen Formulierung der Bitte, wobei er damit versucht, dem allwissenden Gott gegenüber auch den freien Willen und die menschliche Verantwortung ganz zu wahren.

Eine andere alttestamentliche Stelle, die man bei beiden Alexandrinern findet, ist Ps 140 (141), 2. Das einzige Zitat, das bei Clemens im Unterschied zum intensiven Gebrauch des Origenes vorkommt, bezieht sich seltsamerweise nicht sosehr auf das Bild vom Gebet an sich (wie bei Origenes), sondern auf die Gebetsrichtung beim Beten, vielleicht mit einem Hinweis auf den Gebrauch des Abendgebets.⁶⁴

doctrine of prayer, he still regards it, for a great part of the time, as does the ‚average‘ Christian, as the converse of the soul with God, expressing its wonder at God’s greatness in praise, its gratitude for God’s goodness in thanksgiving, its sense of unworthiness in confession, and its needs in petition.“ Dieses Urteil teilt auch Manlio Simonetti, „II ΠΕΡΙ ΕΥΧΗΣ di Origene nel contesto della coeva letteratura eucologica,“ in F. Cocchini (Hg.), *Il dono e la sua ombra. Ricerche sul ΠΕΡΙ ΕΥΧΗΣ di Origene*. Atti del I Convegno del Gruppo Italiano di Ricerca su „Origene e la tradizione alessandrina“ (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 85 f.

⁶³ *Strom.* VII 37, 5: Τίνα καὶ φωνῶν ἀναμείναι ὁ κατὰ πρόθεσιν τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν καὶ πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως τό τε ἐσόμενον ὡς ἤδη ὑπάρχον ἐγνωκώς. Vgl. Origenes, *Or.* V 2: ὁ θεὸς οἶδε τὰ πάντα πρὸ γενέσεως αὐτῶν (Sus 42 = Dn 13, 42), καὶ οὐδὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἐνεστηκέναι ὅτε ἐνέστηκε πρῶτον αὐτῷ γινώσκειται ὡς πρὸ τούτου μὴ γνωσθέν.

⁶⁴ *Strom.* VII 43, 8 (vgl. oben, Anm. 51). Unabhängig von diesem Psalmenzitat kehrt das Bild vom ‚Weihrauch‘ in *Strom.* VII 32, 5: βωμὸν δὲ ἀληθῶς ἄγιον τὴν δικαίαν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ ἅπ’ αὐτῆς θυμίαμα τὴν ὁσίαν εὐχὴν; VII 34, 2 (oben, Anm. 23). In *Strom.* VII spielen die Beter des Alten Testaments, abgesehen von Hannah, keine Rolle, während Origenes sie besonders als ‚Rettungsparadigmen‘ für die These der Nützlichkeit des Gebets benutzt; vgl. dazu meinen Aufsatz: „I paradigmi biblici della preghiera nel Peri Euchês di Origene. Aspetti formali e problematiche ermeneutiche,“ in *Ricerche patristiche in onore di Dom Basil Studer OSB = Augustinianum* 33 (1993) 339–368. *Strom.* II 103 listet einige von diesen Paradigmen auf, ohne den Zusammenhang mit dem Gebet zu erläutern; IV 118, 1 erwähnt die Fürbitte Moses und 119, 2 das „vollkommene Gebet“ (τῇ τελείᾳ πρὸς θεὸν δεήσει) von Esther; VI 29, 1–3 vergleicht die Bitte des Aïakos um den Regen mit der von Samuel und betont die

Die neutestamentlichen Zitate fallen viel zahlreicher aus, u. z. beginnend mit der Gebetskatechese, die dem Vaterunser im Evangelium nach Matthäus vorangeht. Die Mahnung von Mt 6, 7 gegen die ‚Vermehrung der Worte‘ beim Beten muss auch nach Clemens einen konzisen Ausdruck beim Beter hervorrufen, wie auch die Aufforderung Jesu in Mt 6, 5 sich in der Öffentlichkeit unauffällig zu benehmen ihn inspirieren sollte. Obwohl Clemens nur kurz darauf hinweist, findet das mündliche Gebet sein verbindliches Vorbild im ‚Vaterunser‘.⁶⁵ Jedoch, unter all den Stellen, die aus der Vorrede zum Vaterunser bei Matthäus herangezogen werden, spielt vor allem Mt 6, 8 eine grössere Rolle, denn dieses Zitat stützt den Gedanken der göttlichen Erhörung auch beim Fehlen einer Bitte.⁶⁶ Es fehlt schliesslich auch nicht eine Anspielung auf das ‚Kämmerlein‘ von Mt 6, 6, in Verbindung mit Röm 8, 26, eine Schlüsselstelle der Gebetslehre des Origenes: der Hinweis ist zu knapp, um daraus auf eine klarere Stellungnahme zur Rolle des Geistes zu schließen; aber er scheint vor allem, das schweigsame Gebet sowie die aus ihm entspringende innere Stimme empfehlen zu wollen.⁶⁷ Ausserdem enthält diesselbe Stelle eine Anspielung auf Jes 58, 9, eine Passage, die ziemlich häufig bei Origenes vorkommt, besonders um die Erhörung des Gebets des Sohnes zu erklären.⁶⁸ Mit seinem Beten, wie von Joh 17 dargestellt,

Gotteserhörung der Gerechten in der Schrift: πλήρης δὲ ἡ γραφὴ πᾶσα ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς κατὰ τὰς τῶν δικαίων εὐχὰς ἐπακούοντός τε καὶ ἐπιτελοῦντος τοῦ θεοῦ ἕκαστον τῶν αἰτημάτων. Allerdings spielt *Quis dives* 41, 7 auf die Gebete der Drei Jünglinge und Jonas an, u. z. im Zusammenhang mit der Fürbitte des ‚Gottesmenschen‘ für die Sünder: τῶν ἐν πυρὶ κατακοῦει καὶ τῶν ἐν κοιλίᾳ κήτους ἰκετευόντων ἐξακούει.

⁶⁵ *Strom.* VII 49, 6: 'Ἀλλὰ τῇ διὰ στόματος εὐχῇ οὐ πολυλόγῳ χρήται, παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἄ χρὴ αἰτεῖσθαι μαθὼν. Ἐν παντὶ τοίνυν τόπῳ, οὐκ ἀντικρυς δὲ οὐδὲ ἐμφανῶς τοῖς πολλοῖς εὐξεται. Zur Auslegung des Vaterunsers bei Clemens s. Georg Walther, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der griechischen Vaterunser-Exegese* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1914), 1–4; und zuletzt Brown, *The Lord's Prayer through North African Eyes*, 124 f., 153–159. Allerdings sind seine Ergebnisse unannehmbar: er behauptet, dass Clemens das Vaterunser nicht erwähnt habe, weil es mit dem von *Strom.* VII erarbeiteten Modell nicht vereinbar sei. Brown entgehen nicht nur die Anspielungen auf den Evangelientext; er scheint auch zu ignorieren, dass das Vaterunser eine Erklärung erfahren konnte, die der Sicht des Clemens entgegenkam, wie es dann bei Origenes geschah. Zum Herrengebet als Gebet der Kirche, mit Hinweis auf Mt 6, 10, vgl. *Strom.* IV 66, 1: εἰκὼν δὲ τῆς οὐρανόυ ἐκκλησίας ἡ ἐπίγειος, ὅπερ εὐχόμεθα καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς γενέσθαι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ. S. auch oben Anm. 47.

⁶⁶ *Strom.* VII 46, 1: πεπεισμένοις ὡς ὅ τὰ πάντα εἰδὼς θεὸς ὁ τι ἂν συμφέρῃ καὶ οὐκ αἰτούμενος τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς χωρηγεῖ.

⁶⁷ *Strom.* VII 49, 7: καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ταμείῳ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐννοηθῇ μόνον καὶ ἀλαλήτοις στεναγμοῖς ἐπικαλέσθαι τὸν πατέρα, ὃ δὲ ἐγγὺς καὶ ἔτι λαλοῦντος πάρεστιν (Jes 58, 9). Clemens bezieht sich auf Mt 6, 6 zusammen mit Joh 4, 23–24 in *Strom.* I 34, 1.

⁶⁸ *Strom.* IV 47, 3 zitiert Jes 58, 9, um dem Gnostiker die Hilfe des Allmächtigen zu versichern, der gegen die Mächte der Dunkelheit und des Todes kämpft, ohne auf den

liefert übrigens Christus das Modell für das Gebet des Gnostikers, auch wenn diese Stelle nur einmal von Clemens angedeutet wird.⁶⁹ Auch damit führt Clemens ein Motiv ein, das bei Origenes in viel grösserem Maße zur Geltung kommen wird.

Zusammenhang mit dem Gebet direkt einzugehen: ὅρα τὸν ἀήττητον βοηθόν, τὸν ὑπερασπίζοντα ἡμῶν. Vgl. ausserdem V 120, 2.

⁶⁹ *Strom.* VII 41, 7: Ὅτι καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἠΐχετο, εὐχαριστῶν μὲν ἐφ' οἷς ἐτελείωσεν τὴν διακονίαν, εὐχόμενος δὲ ὡς πλείστους ὅσους ἐν ἐπιγνώσει γενέσθαι, ἵν' ἐν τοῖς σφωζομένοις διὰ τῆς σωτηρίας κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν ὁ θεὸς δοξάζεται καὶ ὁ μόνος ἀγαθὸς καὶ ὁ μόνος σωτὴρ δι' υἱοῦ ἐξ αἰῶνος εἰς αἰῶνα ἐπιγινώσκηται. Trotz der wiederholten Betonung der Liebe erwähnt Clemens das Gebet für die Feinde nicht ausdrücklich, aber in *Strom.* II 90, 1 verweist er darauf, u. z. anhand von Mt 5, 44 par.

PART TWO

PERFECTION

DIVINE AND HUMAN MERCY IN THE *STROMATEIS*

Veronika Černušková

Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect
(Matt 5:48)¹

1. ASSIMILATION TO GOD ACCORDING TO MATT 5:48

One of the essential questions in the seventh book, and actually in the entire *Stromateis*, is assimilation to God, as far as it is possible for human nature. Probably the most radical biblical expression about the likeness to God is the verse in Matthew quoted as the motto of this paper. Clement quotes this verse in four passages of his work: once in the fourth book of the *Stromateis*, once in the sixth book and twice in the seventh book. As we can notice, the verse is always quoted by Clement with the original biblical context taken into account;² it is connected with doing good, and in three cases explicitly with mercy and forgiveness:

This, then, is the perfect man's first form of doing good, when it is done not for any advantage he would expect from it, but because he considers it a good thing to do good. Eager in his effort, he always does good regardless of the situation, it is not that he does good in one situation and does not in another one. But doing good is his permanent habit; no longer does he do good for the sake of glory or, as the philosophers say, for the sake of his good reputation, nor for a reward either from men or God; but so as to complete his life according to the *image and likeness* of the Lord. And if, in doing good, he should meet any impediment, then he as a person free from the passions will forgive and will be unmindful of evil, for he is just and good towards *the just and the unjust*.³ To such persons the Lord addresses the following words: *Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*.⁴

¹ Clement quotes Matt 5:48 with a slight deviation from the preserved wording: not ἔσεσθε τέλειοι ..., but γίνεσθε τέλειοι ..., maybe under the influence of parallel in Luke 6:36.

² Matt 5–7 (Sermon on the Mount); cf. Lev 19:2.15–18.

³ Cf. Matt 5:44–45: "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."

⁴ *Strom.* IV 137, 1–3.

And as in the case of Moses, because of his righteous conduct (δικαιοπραγία) and his uninterrupted intercourse with God,⁵ who spoke to him, a shining sign of glorious hue settled on his face.⁶ Likewise a kind of divine power of goodness for governing, for prophecy, and for the work of administration presses on the soul of the righteous one and imprints into it a kind of intellectual radiance,⁷ like the solar ray, a sublime 'seal of righteousness,' a light that unites with the soul through perpetual love that bears God and is born by God (cf. *Theaet.* 176a–b). From this assimilation to God the Saviour, as far as it is possible for human nature, arises in the gnostic, who, as [the Saviour] says, becomes perfect *as the Father who is in heaven*. It is he who says: *Little children, a little while I am still with you* (John 13:33). God is not good by nature in the sense that he remains blessed and incorruptible because *he has no troubles nor gives trouble to another* (cf. Diogenes Laertios, *Vitae* X 139). Instead, he remains perpetually in an immutable state of goodness, because he does good, as it is peculiar to him, since he is truly God and good Father, and since he does good without ceasing.⁸

He never remembers those who have sinned against him, but forgives them; therefore he righteously prays by saying: *Forgive us, for we also forgive*.⁹ Because this is also one of the things which God wishes: to covet nothing and to hate no one, for all men are the work of one will. If our Saviour wishes the gnostic to be perfect like the heavenly Father, that is like himself who says: *Come, o children, hear from me about the fear of the Lord* (Ps 34:12), then he maybe wants him not to need the help from the angels any more, but to accept it from himself, because he is already worthy to do it, and to have, thanks to his obedience, protection in himself.¹⁰

This outline is sufficient to those who have ears.¹¹ For it is not required to unfold the mystery, but to reveal it insofar as it would be called into the mind of those who participate in knowledge; they will comprehend what is meant by the words of the Lord: *Be perfect as your Father is perfect*—in a perfect way forgive sins, forget injuries, and live in the state of the absence of passions.¹²

⁵ Cf. *Strom.* VII 39, 6: ἔστιν οὖν, ὡς εἰπεῖν τολμηρότερον, ὁμιλία πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἢ εὐχή.

⁶ Cf. Exod 33:11; 34:29; *Strom.* IV 117, 1; VI 132, 5.

⁷ Cf. *Strom.* II 102, 6: (νοῖ καὶ λογισμῷ) τὴν πρὸς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἄρχειν ὁμοιότητα προσσηκόντως ὁ κύριος ἐνσφραγίζεται.

⁸ *Strom.* VI 104, 1–3. I would like to thank Judith L. Kovacs for her helpful comments on the English translation of this text.

⁹ Matt 6:12; cf. *Luke* 11:4.

¹⁰ *Strom.* VII 81, 1–3.

¹¹ Cf. Matt 11:15, et al.; quoted e.g. in *Strom.* II 24, 4.

¹² *Strom.* VII 88, 4.

Apart from these passages, there are two other places in the seventh book, in immediate proximity to the passages quoted above, where Clement associates assimilation to God with merciful forgiveness, while citing the immediately preceding verse, Matt 5:45:¹³

God makes his sun shine on the just and on the unjust, and he did indeed send his Son to the just and to the unjust ones. Therefore he who earnestly strives to be assimilated to God generously forgets the injuries and forgives seven and seventy times.¹⁴

But you were washed (1 Cor 6:11), not simply as the others, but with knowledge you were washed from the passions of the soul, in order to be assimilated, as far as it is possible, to the goodness of divine providence, so that you, by virtue of your forbearance and of your willingness to forget the evil, will shine with the kindness of your words and deeds, like the sun, *on the just and on the unjust*. The gnostic achieves this by the elevation of his mind or by the imitation of the one who is better than him; and the third reason are the words *forgive, and you will be forgiven*,¹⁵ because this commandment, by its excess of goodness, almost violently seizes salvation.¹⁶

We can also add *Strom.* II 100, 4, where Clement quotes a parallel pericope from Luke 6:39:

For the law says: *Walk following your God, and follow my commandments. The Lord your God you shall follow, his commandments you shall keep* (Deut 13:4). For the law means assimilation by following. By following, man assimilates to God, as far as it is possible. *Be compassionate and merciful*, says the Lord, *as your heavenly Father is merciful*.¹⁷

It is quite interesting to note that where he quotes Matt 5:48 in explicit relation to forgiveness (*Strom.* IV 137; VII 81 and 88), Clement does not supplement the requirement to resemble God with the customary “as far as possible.”¹⁸ It seems that he does it purposely because he wants his listeners to hear the biblical oxymoron in its complete provocativeness: there is one thing that a man *can* do perfectly, just as the heavenly Father does¹⁹—to

¹³ Cf. also above, *Strom.* IV 137, 1–3, and Matt 5:44 see *Strom.* IV 95, 1.

¹⁴ *Strom.* VII 85, 2.

¹⁵ Cf. Matt 6:14: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

¹⁶ *Strom.* VII 86, 5–7.

¹⁷ *Strom.* II 100, 4. Cf. also *Paed.* I 72, 2–3.

¹⁸ Cf. *Strom.* IV 95, 1.

¹⁹ However, in the conclusion to the final part commenting on Matt 5:48, Clement directly states that human virtue and God’s virtue are not equal, as it is not possible for a human to become literally as perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect—human perfection consists in

forgive, i.e., to take no revenge on anyone, and to do good to everyone. Whoever acts in such a way towards others, and whoever is aware that God acts in such a way towards him, is making great strides towards knowing God.²⁰

In my paper, therefore, I would like to stress the key role that, according to Clement, merciful forgiveness has in human spiritual life, with regard to the knowledge of God and to salvation (in Clement's thought these two things are exactly the same).²¹

2. MERCY GENERATES REPENTANCE²²

When someone starts to believe, there is always a moment, according to Clement, where he becomes terrified (φόβος) and realizes the evil he previously committed, i.e. he repents (μετάνοια),²³ and decides to behave well from that moment on.²⁴ Thanks to such awareness of the past and the virtue of practising good habits he is prepared to enter the 'new life,' so that he can be baptized. During the baptismal immersion, all the previous guilt is washed away, regardless of how serious or intentional it was; the newly baptized person is thus completely absolved of his guilt and his sins are removed as if they had never been committed.²⁵ The remission of sins (ἄφεσις) which occurs in baptism is revolutionary, unique and unrepeatable. However, there is a question about what happens if the baptized person does not fulfil his effort to act in a good and beautiful manner, but transgresses against God or his neighbour.

The first and only comprehensive explanation of repentance and forgiveness in the *Stromateis* is given by Clement in the second book;²⁶ we thus

living according to the Father's will, i.e. in living perfectly in accordance with the commandment of the gospel to love (*Strom.* VII 88, 6–7; a similar statement is mentioned in *Strom.* VI 114, 5–6; cf. also *Strom.* II 74–75).

²⁰ Cf. *Strom.* VII 86, 6.

²¹ *Strom.* IV 136, 5; cf. II 91, 2; IV 27, 2.

²² *Strom.* II 70, 3: συγγνώμη μετάνοιαν πέφυκε γεννᾶν.

²³ *Strom.* II 26, 5: ... εἰ ἐφ' οἷς ἡμαρτεν μετανόησεν, εἰ σύνεσιν ἔλαβεν ἐφ' οἷς ἔπταισεν, καὶ μετέγνω, ὅπερ ἐστὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἔγνω· βραδεῖα γὰρ γνώσις μετάνοια, γνώσις δὲ ἡ πρώτη ἀναμαρτησία, cf. *Quis dives* 40, 1.

²⁴ Cf. *Strom.* II 58, 2.

²⁵ *Strom.* II 58, 1; IV 153, 3–4.

²⁶ *Strom.* II 55–77. André Méhat locates the account of forgiveness and repentance in chapters II 55–71, and he interprets it in his precious article "Pénitence seconde et péché involontaire chez Clément d'Alexandrie," *VC* 8 (1954) 225–233; later he comes back again to this topic in his work *Étude sur les "Stromates" de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Les Éditions

draw on it first, and then we will link it to the other relevant passages in the following books. We will do so by also taking into account another important text of Clement's regarding forgiveness, the homily *Quis dives salvetur?*, and also his *Eclogae propheticae*.

At the beginning of the above-mentioned passage of the second book,²⁷ our author answers the question regarding the possibility of repeated repentance in an apparently univocal way: the Lord is merciful. He is aware of human weakness and he knows how insidious our enemy is. That is why he gives the baptized one who involuntarily falls into some wrongdoing the chance to "repent irrevocably" once more²⁸ and achieve forgiveness, but not in the sense of the removal of guilt (ἄφεσις), but rather in the sense of a pardon (συγγνώμη). The baptismal exculpation cannot be obtained again.²⁹ And if the sin were repeated in the future, it could not be classified as an involuntary sin: indeed, that would mean either that the previous repentance was illusory, or, if the sinner really regretted his sin—that is, he really understood what he had done—then to repeat the act of evil would mean to do so in full consciousness.

If we stick to these initial claims of Clement's account as we presented them in the last paragraph, we would necessarily come to the conclusion that our author presents, under the label of 'divine mercy,' a strange, extremely rigorous statement. Is it really, according to him, possible to obtain the remission of a sin committed after baptism only once, and only in the event of involuntary failure? And would that really be only a sort of forgiveness of a lower degree which does not fully renew the dignity of the baptized person?

First, let us notice that this explanation of repentance immediately follows a long section about fear,³⁰ in which Clement presents the repentance of a believer as the fruit of a fear that fully corresponds to reason, and that comes when the person decides to listen to the voice of reason: that is, in the

du Seuil, 1966), 317–321. Regarding the topic of forgiveness in Clement see also the insightful articles of Klaus Schmölle, "Gnosis und Metanoia. Die antropologische Sicht der Buße bei Klemens von Alexandrien," *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 82 (1974) 304–312, and Éric Junod, "Un écho d'une controverse autour de la pénitence. L'histoire de l'apôtre Jean et du chef des brigands chez Clément d'Alexandrie," *RHPhR* 60 (1980) 153–160; cf. also Bernhard Poschmann, *Paenitentia secunda* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1940), 230–260 and Heinrich Karpp, "Die Bußlehre in Klemens von Alexandria," *ZNW* 43 (1950) 224–242.

²⁷ *Strom.* II 56–59, 1.

²⁸ *Strom.* II 56, 2–57, 1. The expression 'irrevocable repentance' (ἀμεταμέλητος μετάνοια) calls to mind 2 Cor 7:10.

²⁹ *Strom.* II 58, 1.

³⁰ *Strom.* II 30–55.

moment of conversion.³¹ The passage on repentance and forgiveness is then directly introduced by a number of free quotes from the *Shepherd of Hermas* that speak exactly about the importance of fear related to faith, as well as about the evil of a destructive fear from the tempter, with the evident aim being to concretize Clement's statement.³² Repentance is thus placed in the sequence (ἀκολουθία) of virtues: in order to be a true virtue, repentance has to be preceded by salutary fear flowing from faith, and it also has to be accompanied by hope.³³ Therefore, in its first part,³⁴ the passage on repentance invites one to maintain an attitude of fear before God, as it is a cautious admonition against a lax attitude towards sin. In the main part of the exposition and also in the following books of the *Stromateis*, as we shall see later, Clement will indicate the way in which the believer can and should gradually improve his relationship with God by passing, even in the field of human failures, from a relationship of simple subordination to one of partnership.

Clement's explanation of repentance and forgiveness is then grounded in several biblical texts. In the first place, he cites the following claim from the Letter to the Hebrews: "If we sin voluntarily after receiving knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment and a flaming fire that is going to consume the adversaries."³⁵ Clement does not want to question this statement and, as we have seen, he fully develops its consequences.³⁶ However, he subsequently tries to interpret it on a more sublime level: he recalls the concepts from the Old Testament about divine compassion and mercy, and he questions which sin could ever be considered voluntary and thus deserving of 'judgment' and 'the flaming fire.'

In order to find this out, the teacher of Alexandria freely binds the biblical concept of guilt with the Aristotelian threefold classification of injury.³⁷

³¹ See mainly *Strom.* II 31, 1; II 32–33; 41, 1; cf. II 59, 3.

³² Cf. *Herm. Mand.* 8, 1–4, in *Strom.* II 55, 4–5.

³³ About the sequence of virtues cf. *Strom.* II 45, 1; 55, 3; 80, 2–3; IV 59, 2; 163, 3; VI 158, 4; VIII 30, 2. About the origin of this idea in the philosophical tradition see Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study of Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 83f.; see also Laura Rizzerio, "La nozione di ἀκολουθία come logica della verità in Clemente di Alessandria," *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica* 79 (1987) 175–195.

³⁴ *Strom.* II 56–59, 1.

³⁵ Heb 10:26–27, in *Strom.* II 57, 2. Cf. *Herm. Mand.* 4, 2, 2, in *Strom.* II 55, 6.

³⁶ As pointed out by Méhat, "Pénitence seconde," 227.

³⁷ A detailed analysis of the rather free dependence of Clement's ideas on the relevant Aristotelian concept was accomplished by Elizabeth A. Clark, *Clement's Use of Aristotle*:

Modifying the Aristotelian definition of ἁμαρτία, Clement states that ‘sin’ is threefold: misfortune (ἀτύχημα), sin/error (ἀμάρτημα, ἁμαρτία) and crime (ἁδίκημα). Misfortune is merely unwilling error (παράλογος ἁμαρτία), where passions are by no means involved. On the contrary, a crime is voluntary wrongdoing (ἐκούσιος κακία), when someone voluntarily gives himself over to passion, e. g. he robs a grave.³⁸ Sin/error is understood by Clement as an involuntary crime (ἀκούσιος ἁδικία), which arises “from the incapacity to judge what one should do, or from the incapacity to do it,” that is, from ignorance or weakness. The sinner acts under the influence of passion too, but unwillingly, like someone falling into a hole because one either fails to see the hole, or is incapable of jumping over it.³⁹ As biblical evidence for such a threefold classification of sin/guilt, Clement presents particularly 1 John 5:16, where “a mortal sin” (ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον) and “a sin that is not mortal” (ἁμαρτία μὴ πρὸς θάνατον) are distinguished.⁴⁰

Another text on which Clement’s concept of involuntary sin is based, but not quite openly this time, is Rom 6–8.⁴¹ “The sin/error is my involuntary [act],”⁴² “the voluntary occurs on account of a desire or a choosing or an intention.”⁴³ It is prescribed to us and it is in our competence (ἐφ’ ἡμῖν ἐστι) that we *want* to be instructed and that we *want* to act according to God’s commandments.⁴⁴ If we fail in some respect to act rightly (this decision notwithstanding), we actually commit the sin against our will, that is, we commit an error.⁴⁵ Our “*will* is in the law of the Lord,” that is, in Christ.⁴⁶ But if we intentionally refuse instruction, then “we would commit a crime against our own soul.”⁴⁷ Such a voluntary rejection of the Logos would indeed be in

the Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria’s refutation of Gnosticism (New York: Mellen, 1977), 45–65.

³⁸ *Strom.* II 63, 1; II 62, 2.

³⁹ *Strom.* II 62, 3; cf. II 26, 3; 60, 1; VII 101, 6.

⁴⁰ *Strom.* II 66, 4–5.

⁴¹ Rom 6:14 is explicitly cited in *Strom.* II 64, 4.

⁴² *Strom.* II 64, 3: ἔστιν οὖν ἡ μὲν ἁμαρτία ἐμὸν ἀκούσιον; cf. Rom 7:18–20. In order to prevent a Christian’s lack of responsibility for his deeds, Clement seems to slightly revise Paul’s concept, that “if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.”

⁴³ *Strom.* II 62, 1; cf. Aristotle, *Eth. Eud.* 1223a23.

⁴⁴ *Strom.* II 62, 4: ἀλλ’ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν γε ἢ τε πρὸς τὴν παιδείαν ἡμῶν παράστασις ἢ τε πρὸς τὰς ἐντολὰς ὑπακοή.

⁴⁵ *Strom.* II 64, 3.

⁴⁶ *Strom.* II 68, 2. Clement associates a quotation from Ps 1:2 with an allusion to the *Preaching of Peter*, where the Lord is called the Law and the Word. Cf. Rom 7:16; 8:1.

⁴⁷ *Strom.* II 63, 1.

clear contradiction of the fundamental attitude of faith, and it would imply a conscious return to the state before baptism, which is the beginning of the Christian life—that is, it would imply death.⁴⁸

According to our author, sin with mortal consequences, therefore, consists in a conscious decision to reject the good, or in an intentional refusal and unwillingness to be instructed about what is good; it is thus deliberate alienation, denial of faithfulness, refusal of a relationship.⁴⁹ It is not easy to judge from the outside whether, in a specific situation, an act is a crime with mortal consequences, or just a mere lapse resulting from weakness or unintentional ignorance, because the essential point is not the seriousness of the transgression itself, but the intention of the sinner, which might be ignored by the people around the sinner, but not by God.⁵⁰ As an allegory of mortal sin, Clement gives the example of Lot's wife, who lost her life because she voluntarily returned to evil and destruction despite an explicit ban of which she was fully aware (i.e. she decided to turn her back on the good she had initially been moving towards).⁵¹

In the *Stromateis*, Clement does not present a situation in which a person commits an involuntarily bad act. We can, however, mention the famous exemplum in the conclusion of his homiletic essay *Quis dives salvetur*.⁵² This story, which illustrates the generous width of divine mercy towards a man who is overcome by evil, is presented by Clement as a description of a real event: Saint John, during one of his pastoral visits to a city, gets to like a young catechumen and he consigns him to the care of the local bishop. After John returns to Ephesus, the young man is educated by the bishop and baptized; but after that the bishop's care fades away because the bishop thinks that the care is no longer needed, and the young Christian boy then gets seduced by wicked companions. First, he starts to attend prodigal wassails, then he starts to steal, and at last he becomes the chief of a gang of brigands. But when the apostle John hears of this, he finds him and makes efforts to catch him up with lamentation and brings him back and the young man is, metaphorically speaking, "baptized for the second time by tears," and eventually he is even ordained as a bishop. "By this [John] gave a grand

⁴⁸ Cf. Clement's reproaches for transgression against the common faith, *Strom.* VII 96–97.

⁴⁹ *Strom.* II 62, 1: τὸ δ' ἐκούσιον ἢ τὸ κατ' ὀρεξίν ἐστιν ἢ τὸ κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἢ τὸ κατὰ διάνοιαν. Méhat, "Pénitence seconde," 231. Cf. *Strom.* IV 157, 3.

⁵⁰ *Strom.* II 61, 2–3; 26, 5.

⁵¹ *Strom.* II 61, 4; cf. VII 93, 4; *Quis dives* 39, 6.

⁵² *Quis dives* 42, 1–15.

example of true repentance and a strong evidence of the new birth, a winning sign of visible resurrection,” Clement concludes.⁵³

At the beginning of the above-mentioned passage in *Stromateis* II,⁵⁴ Clement points out the possibility of a fatal inner diversion from God, probably for two reasons: the first, as I have already remarked, is the educational support of salutary fear or caution (φόβος, εὐλάβεια), the second is the emphasis on the human freedom of choice, which Clement wants to highlight before he starts to relativize the responsibility for making wrong choices, which is the main message of his text. Indeed, a man has a full right to choose or to refuse, which is not lessened even by the covenant of baptism. However, this covenant binds the believer together with God and “covers a multitude of sins.”⁵⁵ This bond is maintained by *both parts* regardless of sin, and thus the believer cannot be separated from it even by yielding to the tempter’s fraud or pressure.⁵⁶ “Sin is not to have any power over you, since you are not under the law but under grace,” Clement states.⁵⁷

Drawing on this, Clement makes what at first sight seems a rather surprising statement, that human μετάνοια (defined as knowledge *sui generis*) is generated by God’s mercy (συγγνώμη):⁵⁸ this ‘forgiveness in a relationship’ consists not in the remission of sins as during the baptismal ‘forgiveness for a new beginning’ (ἄφεσις), but in the healing of one who has done wrong, and the healing leads to knowledge (μετάνοια).⁵⁹

“We are not like the Lord, because we *want* indeed, but we cannot,” says Clement.⁶⁰ Despite this, we should become like our teacher⁶¹ by the fact that we will be declared sons and will see the Father through the mediation of his own Son.⁶² “The volition takes the lead of everything and the intellectual powers are by nature servants of volition. *Want and you will be able to*, says the Scripture.”⁶³ When a man who wants to be faithful to God gains

⁵³ *Quis dives* 42, 15.

⁵⁴ *Strom.* II 56–59, 1.

⁵⁵ 1 Pet 4:8, in *Strom.* II 65, 3.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Strom.* IV 96 (Rom 8:38–39); 124, 2.

⁵⁷ Rom 6:14, in *Strom.* II 64, 4.

⁵⁸ *Strom.* VII 70, 3.

⁵⁹ *Strom.* II 70, 3; cf. IV 27, 3.

⁶⁰ *Strom.* II 77, 3; cf. Rom 7:18.

⁶¹ Cf. Matt 10:24; Luke 6:40.

⁶² *Strom.* II 77, 4; cf. Rom 8:14–17.

⁶³ *Strom.* II 77, 5; cf. IV 41, 1; VII 82, 7; cf. John 5:6, Mark 1:40.

knowledge (through forgiveness), there is no discrepancy between his volition, judgement and practice;⁶⁴ “he holds virtue by his knowledge (γνωστικῶς).”⁶⁵

3. SINS AGAINST THE LAW AND AGAINST GOD HIMSELF

From what has been said so far we could deduce that Clement does not draw any distinction between more and less serious failures of a Christian. Is it really like this? First and foremost, our author does not present the divine healing mercy as something painless—the divine Logos reproaches, inculcates bitter shame and purifies a person even by certain punishments.⁶⁶ These, however, are neither a revenge for the evil, nor a way in which man is able to somehow cancel the bad act. These punishments have merely a therapeutic and pedagogical function—their aim is to awake repentance, provoke understanding and help one to behave well in the future. God trains his faithful one like a father trains his children,⁶⁷ i.e. like someone who is greater than man and who does not need a person to pay back his debt. His punishment is thus always forgiveness, which generates retrospective knowledge (repentance) as a remedy for ignorance and weakness. This process is not limited even by physical death.⁶⁸

The Educator himself chooses, according to the situation, more or less painful forms of ‘therapy,’ which need not be proportional to the gravity of the faults.⁶⁹ On the other hand, a certain objective distinction of the seriousness of a failure certainly exists in Clement’s thought. His claim at the beginning of the passage under analysis that he who is seduced to sin even after his vocation is allowed to “repent irrevocably” once more (and only one time)⁷⁰ evidently considers some very serious transgression which, if considered honestly, must be judged as *in fact* involuntary,⁷¹ but

⁶⁴ *Strom.* II 77, 5; cf. II 26, 4.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Strom.* II 80, 3; IV 41, 1; VII 82, 7.

⁶⁶ E.g. *Strom.* VII 56, 3; 72, 6.

⁶⁷ *Strom.* VII 102, 4–5; *Paed.* I 70, 3.

⁶⁸ E.g. *Strom.* IV 37, 7; VI 109, 5; VII 34, 4; 78, 3. See Klaus Schmöle, *Läuterung nach dem Tode und pneumatische Auferstehung bei Klemens von Alexandrien* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1974).

⁶⁹ The shame of the guilty one often happens to be a sufficiently corrective punishment (cf. *Strom.* VI 109, 5). For instance, the neophyte brigand did not need to be punished for his grave misconduct: repentance (and hope) was awakened in him by John’s merciful approach.

⁷⁰ *Strom.* II 57.

⁷¹ As is his habit, Clement does not use exact terminology, nor does he create an apparently wholly coherent concept of the voluntary character of the misconduct in the framework

which surely does not permit further recurrence. It would indeed be absurd if, for example, after being ordained as a bishop after his robberies had been forgiven, the young man from the cited exemplum were to leave his episcopal position and then rob again for a couple of years, and then ask for forgiveness and be reinstalled into his office once more. This kind of misconduct is probably also meant by Clement in the seventh book, when he mentions the sin which was experienced by “many of us” Christians, and which separates the believer for that moment from the ecclesial community and is subject to a public punishment.⁷²

There are also sins which (definitely) occur involuntarily, and therefore they are not ‘imputed’ at all⁷³—God forgives his faithful ones for them, ‘covers’ them and heals them.⁷⁴ These faults against “evangelical perfection”⁷⁵ are not subject to the law anymore, because they are purely mistakes in the relationship of the faithful to God.⁷⁶

In this context, Clement’s short commentary on Mark 9:17–29, given in *Eclogae propheticae*, is interesting:⁷⁷ A man brings to the disciples of Jesus a possessed boy, but the disciples are not able to heal him. The boy’s father then asks Jesus himself to heal him. During the dialogue Jesus provokes and urges the father to let his faith grow, which becomes the basis on which the son is later healed. Clement comments:

With a possessed one the Saviour showed to his faithful disciples that prayer is stronger than faith. He said: *These things can be amended by prayer*. Whoever started to believe, he accepted from the Lord the remission of sins; whoever entered the knowledge, since he does not sin any more [i.e. does not commit serious mistakes against the law], he gains forgiveness of the rest [i.e. of the sins which are not subject to the law], by himself [i.e. by his own prayer].

either of all his work or of the whole of the *Stromateis*. In other passages of his work he speaks about the voluntary character of sin in a broader sense; for instance, he speaks explicitly about the pedagogical punishment of the baptized ones who have sinned voluntarily (*Strom.* IV 153, 5; ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκουσίαις κολαζόμεθα), probably having in mind exactly those very serious misconducts which cancel faithfulness but which can be regretted by the Christian who, by doing that, can return to the Church. According to E. Junod (“Un écho d’une controverse,” 154), in *Quis dives* Clement then even completely renounces the distinction between voluntary and involuntary sin.

⁷² *Strom.* VII 102, 4.

⁷³ *Strom.* II 66, 1: οὐ λογίζονται δὲ ὅσαι μὴ κατὰ προαίρεσιν συνίστανται.

⁷⁴ *Strom.* II 65–66.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Strom.* VII 76, 1; IV 15, 4–6; 159, 1; VI 97, 2; II 66, 1.

⁷⁶ *Strom.* IV 107, 4.

⁷⁷ *Ecl.* 15, 1–2.

Similarly, according to Clement's interpretation the believer whose sins are forgiven in baptism (mediated by disciples), who "entered knowledge" and "does not sin anymore," urgently needs "forgiveness of the rest"—healing from sins which are no longer gross transgressions of the Decalogue, but nevertheless are still a manifestation of a certain 'obsession': a corruption by sin, and a tendency towards it (so-called passions), which persists inside the person and urgently needs to be healed, which can then be realized only through prayer.⁷⁸

In a similar way the theologian of Alexandria also speaks of forgiveness after the baptism obtained in personal prayer in another passage:

God forgives everything that happened before, but what comes after must be managed by each one alone. This also means to repent: to recognize the things that happened and to ask the Father to forget them. He is the only one who is able to undo acts that have been committed,⁷⁹ because he is capable, through the mercy which flows from himself, and with the dew of the Spirit, to erase the previous sins.⁸⁰

4. TWOFOLD REPENTANCE

Let us now turn our attention to the very concept of repentance, *metanoia*, and let us notice how wide the meaning hidden behind it is. The term *metanoia* is usually translated, if not by the already-mentioned English equivalent 'repentance,' as 'conversion,' 'change of mind,' or 'penitence.' In some places in his work, the Alexandrian theologian clearly distinguishes a twofold *metanoia*: the first, which is more general, is defined by him as late knowledge (βραδεία γνῶσις) of the wrongness of a particular act and as the dread of what happened; the second, considered a higher level of repentance by Clement, is a situation in which a man feels ashamed of himself for doing what he has done, when he comprehends what sin in itself actually is.⁸¹ Such an experience, as we have seen above, strengthens a person to resist sin beforehand. Therefore God's mercy (συγγνώμη), which

⁷⁸ Let us recall Clement's 'simple theory of Christian philosophy' which connects the teachings on πάθη with demonology; πάθη are considered as reprints of the meek and yielding soul, as hallmarks of spiritual powers which, according to Eph 6:12, a Christian has to fight against (*Strom.* II 110, 1–3). These evil spirits are not present in the human soul, as Basilides and Valentinus claim, but surrender and pollute it from the outside (*Strom.* II 112–117).

⁷⁹ But cf. *Strom.* IV 153–154.

⁸⁰ *Quis dives* 40, 1.

⁸¹ *Strom.* IV 37, 7; VI 97.

this repentance is a result of, heals the believer and allows him to achieve a state where he does not sin (against the law) any more, (basic) sinlessness,⁸² and leads him to the purity of heart and *apatheia*.

A person who recognizes God and himself in this way, the gnostic, is fully aware of this ongoing purifying process, and, along with God's friend Abraham, says: "I am but dust and ashes!"⁸³ He recognizes and confesses more and more subtle mistakes and the unrighteousness of his inner self, which no longer fall under the law: "Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight."⁸⁴ In such a way he progresses towards a more and more righteous sinlessness and a more and more complete recovery.⁸⁵ For the more beautifully a person acts, the more he recognizes God, the closer he gets to the Holy Spirit, who is "searching every inmost part"; and thus Jesus Christ "whose blood was sacrificed for us" gets closer to him.⁸⁶

This is surely not to say that Clement does not place a strong emphasis on the active effort of a believer to avoid harmful acts and to gain virtues—there is plenty of evidence for this.⁸⁷ However, at the same time Clement argues that when someone is trying to keep the law without real understanding (this means, among other things, that his moral efforts are not supported by awareness of God's mercy), he cannot accomplish righteous action in all its aspects.⁸⁸ The gnostic can accomplish this, since his "acts naturally follow knowledge, just like a shadow follows a body."⁸⁹ In other words, "love does not allow a person to sin."⁹⁰

To sum up what we have seen, *metanoia*, this virtue that comes onto the scene after faith and fear, and accompanied by hope, is the one virtue (in that it is the one reality which lasts the whole duration of a Christian's life).⁹¹ *Metanoia* means a knowing and grateful conversion to God, based

⁸² *Strom.* II 26, 5. About sinlessness as a state which should be achieved by the Christian see also *Paed.* I 92, 1; *Strom.* VII 14, 2–3; VII 18, 2; cf. IV 142, 4–143, 1.

⁸³ Gen 18:27, in *Strom.* IV 106, 1.

⁸⁴ Ps 51:6, in *Strom.* IV 107, 4.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Strom.* VII 14, 5: τὸν δ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἱερευθέντα δοξάζομεν σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἱερεύοντες εἰς τε τὸ ἀνευθεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ἀνευθεοῦς καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀπαθεῖς ἐκ τοῦ ἀπαθοῦς.

⁸⁶ Prov 20:27 and *1 Clem* 21, 3, in *Strom.* IV 107, 4–8.

⁸⁷ E.g. *Strom.* VII 62, 7.

⁸⁸ *Strom.* VII 84, 1.

⁸⁹ *Strom.* VII 82, 7.

⁹⁰ *Strom.* IV 113, 1; cf. VII 59.

⁹¹ This is also the opinion of Schmöle, "Gnosis und Metanoia," 307 f. According to this author, the idea of repentance as the only immutable attitude which one decides for during baptism is related to Clement's conception of a continuous lifelong martyrdom/testimony,

on a reciprocal relationship of faithfulness. Yet the Christian is not tied by this bond—he has the opportunity and full right to release himself from it (and therefore it is necessary that he “pays attention to himself”).⁹² However, God understands human weakness very well, Clement assures us; he knows that our failures and escapes are not expressions of our desire, choice or intention to do evil.⁹³

In a sense, however, we can distinguish a twofold *metanoia*, which corresponds to a twofold salutary conversion: from paganism to faith and from faith to knowledge.⁹⁴ Its first phase contains perfection in a germinal form, the perfection of ‘the image,’⁹⁵ and it springs from faith as retrospective “knowledge in short.”⁹⁶ The second phase of repentance is then growing knowledge, which renders a person ‘according to the likeness’ of God.

The beginning of life—*metanoia* sealed by baptism—is ‘unrepeatable,’ although in the case of a (serious) violation of faithfulness out of ignorance or weakness, it is, however, possible to renew *metanoia* by the ‘baptism of tears,’ but this, of course, only once. The return of the unfaithful is, then, perceived as a kind of resurrection.⁹⁷ If not corrupted by a similar excess, the virtue of repentance continuously endures in the life of a believer in the form of a penitent late knowledge, which is awakened with loving severity by God’s forgiving pedagogy (and which ought to be intermediated to less advanced Christians).⁹⁸ Then the Christian is urged to “manage by himself” his errors in prayer: to gain from the dialogue with God the necessary recovery, from which arises the second and higher grade of *metanoia*: the understanding of what is sin in itself. This knowledge hereafter prevents the person from sinning again. The closer he gets to God, the more clearly he can see his passions, faults and failures which are no longer under the law; yet

in which the Gnostic witness spreads faith instead of blood, and which is fulfilled in the act of verbal testimony, as well as in physical martyrdom: in the “overall repentance at the end of the life, expressed by act” (*Strom.* IV 73, 3), see *ibid.* 310–312.

⁹² *Strom.* II 71, 3.

⁹³ *Strom.* II 62, 1.

⁹⁴ *Strom.* VII 57, 4; 46, 3.

⁹⁵ Gen 1:26, cf. e.g. *Strom.* II 131, 6.

⁹⁶ *Strom.* VII 57, 3: ἡ μὲν οὖν πίστις σύντομός ἐστιν, ὡς εἰπεῖν, τῶν κατεπειγόντων γυνώσις.

⁹⁷ Cf. the final sentence of the story of the brigand/bishop in *Quis dives* 42, 15; cf. also *Adumbr.* I (ad 1 Pet 1:3) and also *Strom.* II 147 (the evangelical meaning of the order of the law to stone an adulterous woman and her lover).

⁹⁸ *Strom.* II 69, 2–3. *Quis dives* 41; 42, 9–10. Schmöle (“Gnosis und Metanoia,” 311) sees in the Alexandrian praxis of the spiritual guidance given to the beginners by the advanced, recorded in Clement and passed on by Origenes and the Eastern monastic movement, the origins of personal confession.

the gnostic still understands them in their essence, so that, with gratefulness for the divine healing mercy, he confesses: I am but the dust, a man made from the soil.⁹⁹ But “the soil purified is gold,” namely the human being who has become ἀπαθής.¹⁰⁰

5. PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR (1JOHN 4:18)

The development of μετάνοια in a believer thus lies in the transformation of a penitent late knowledge into a knowledge that is perfectly clear and timely and, therefore, sinless and absolutely confident in relation to God, and also inseparable from God from now on. The ideal, perfect gnostic is relieved from sins and passions thanks to his obedience to forgiving God’s pedagogy. Not only does he no longer fear punishment for wrongdoings, as is the case with the Christian at the childish level of faith, but he even removes the higher level of fear of disappointing the Father’s trust,¹⁰¹ since he has opted for the good and cannot lose his virtues.¹⁰² Love has overcome his fear perfectly.¹⁰³ Using γνωστικὴ ἄσκησις (i.e. a practice connected to knowledge of which repentance is a part), he made his virtue incapable of being lost (ἀναπόβλητος), and this condition has become his nature.¹⁰⁴ Just as a stone cannot remove its weight, it is impossible for the gnostic to lose his γνωστικῶς apprehended virtue¹⁰⁵ (gained at the top level of μετάνοια because of the recognition of God’s mercy or love). The fact that he possesses irreversible virtue does not mean that the gnostic gives up the freedom of choice. On the contrary, he has realized its final, supremely free expression.¹⁰⁶

6. WE LOVE, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US (1JOHN 4:19)

The mission of the gnostic, as Clement says, is not only to abandon evil, which is a necessary condition of further progress; nor is it the gaining of virtue and knowledge for the purpose of achieving perfection or making a

⁹⁹ Cf. *Strom.* V 63, 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Strom.* II 116, 2.

¹⁰¹ *Strom.* II 53, 3–5.

¹⁰² Cf. *Strom.* VII 46–47.

¹⁰³ Cf. 1John 4,18 in: *Strom.* IV 100, 5.

¹⁰⁴ See *SVF* I 569; III 237.

¹⁰⁵ *Strom.* VII 46, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Strom.* VI 157, 3: αὐτίκα τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ βουλῇσει μάλιστα ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν προαίρεσις ὑπακούει.

heavenly career; the true gnostic chooses to accomplish and to know good for its own sake—i.e. “out of love.”¹⁰⁷ The gnostic perfectly understands and applies the commandment “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect,”¹⁰⁸ and “be merciful, as your Father is merciful,”¹⁰⁹ for he knows God’s merciful love and also the story of his soul.

To forgive other people, which finds its peak in active evangelical love for one’s enemies, is thus in a sense a key aspect of love. To forgive others is conceived by Clement as the answer to God’s forgiveness and mercy, which was and is accepted by the gnostic, and this answer generates further reaction from God in turn.¹¹⁰ The gnostic is aware (thanks to the highest level of μετάνοια) of the value of the forgiveness and mercy that he receives from God, and with his forgiveness and prayer for God’s mercy towards others he becomes “an instrument of God’s goodness.”¹¹¹ Clement argues that to fail to forgive and to wish for revenge means to take away God’s goodness from one’s brother.¹¹² He thus evidently understands forgiveness and prayer for God’s mercy as an act that opens others to the action of God’s mercy,¹¹³ as help to someone who is languishing spiritually: “Be merciful towards anyone I fight with,” Clement cites an unknown *logion*.¹¹⁴ It is, therefore, a certain paradoxical requirement for a Christian to ask in accordance with the will of God (i.e. to ask good God for the good¹¹⁵)—as if God said: Have mercy on him, so that I will have mercy on him.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁷ *Strom.* IV 135, 4: μόνη δ' ἡ δι' ἀγάπην εὐποιία ἡ δι' αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν αἰρετὴ τῷ γνωστικῷ, cf. IV 136; 143–144.

¹⁰⁸ Matt 5:48.

¹⁰⁹ Luke 6:36.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Strom.* IV 66, 2–3 (Col 3:12–15: “Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.”); *Strom.* VII 81, 1 (Matt 6:12: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”).

¹¹¹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 81, 7. The gnostic knows that every human is a work and image of God, even though “because of the circumstances some are more damaged than others” (*Strom.* VII 86, 2; cf. VII 81, 2).

¹¹² *Strom.* VII 85, 5.

¹¹³ Cf. John 20:23.

¹¹⁴ *Strom.* VII 74, 5; cf. Job 19:21; Ps 68:27. See Jean Ruwet, “Les *agrapha* dans les œuvres de Clément d’Alexandrie,” *Biblica* 30 (1949) 149.

¹¹⁵ *Strom.* VII 39, 3.

¹¹⁶ To further examine the topic of intercessory prayer see the paper of Jana Plátová in the present volume.

The merciful attitude of a gnostic invokes in its turn, so to speak, another love from God. Clement even states that the “commandment *forgive, and you will be forgiven*,¹¹⁷ by its excess of goodness, seizes salvation almost violently,”¹¹⁸ as if it had broken into the relationship with the Saviour.¹¹⁹ It is thus a wholly appropriate answer to God’s challenge, compared by our author to the singing of the Sirens who almost force their listeners to listen.¹²⁰ (Of course we shall not neglect the ‘almost’ and the ‘as if,’ in both senses: Clement surely does not want to say that God violates human will or that he would permit himself to be manipulated by humans in any way. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,” says the Lord.)¹²¹ Whoever behaves in such a way towards other people and is aware that God behaves in such a way in relation to him grasps salvation (i.e. the knowledge of God, love), and attains happiness (εὐδαιμονία),¹²² because he fully identifies with the intention of Christ, the universal Saviour.¹²³

Through forgiveness and mercy one can gain the “unfailing divine treasure,” the true “pouch which does not moulder,” the equipment for the journey (ἐφοδίων) towards eternal life: a merciful God’s love.¹²⁴ This love is the “inner wealth, the treasure hidden in ‘earthen vessels,’ armoured all around by the power of God the Father, by the blood of God the Child and by the dew of the Holy Spirit.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ Cf. Matt 6:12–14.

¹¹⁸ *Strom.* VII 86, 6.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Clement’s idea of ‘beautiful violence exercised on God’ in *Quis dives* 37, 1; 21, 3; 42, 19; *Strom.* VII 85, 2.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Strom.* II 9, 6–7; VII 100, 5.

¹²¹ Exod 33:19; Rom 9:15 (in *Strom.* IV 33, 7); cf. *Quis dives* 21, 2.

¹²² Cf. *Strom.* II 100, 3–4; Luke 6:36.

¹²³ *Strom.* VII 86, 2; cf. 62, 2–3.

¹²⁴ *Strom.* IV 33, 6–7 (Matt 6:20–21, Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33).

¹²⁵ *Quis dives* 34, 1 (2 Cor 4:7); cf. 40, 1.

THE Gnostic's INTERCESSORY PRAYER ACCORDING TO CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Jana Plátová

... because as He is, so are we in this world

(1John 4:17)

1. DOING GOOD AS THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE Gnostic's ASSIMILATION TO GOD

"The image of God is really the man who does good,"¹ Clement says in one of the crucial passages of the second book of his *Stromateis*, a passage in which he speaks of the gnostic and his imitation of God. In this paper, I would like to focus on a particular aspect of doing good, namely the intercessory prayer. I will try to put Clement's remarks concerning the topic into the context of his teaching on the gnostic's perfection and reveal the sources on which he draws. This paper thus does not aim to summarise Clement's teaching on prayer as such, judge its originality and contribution from the point of view of Christian spirituality,² or introduce the intercessory prayer as a more or less substantial part of Christian praying efforts; instead, it aims to show that a prayer for one's own salvation and the salvation of others

¹ *Strom.* II 102, 2: τὸ γὰρ ὄντι εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος εὐεργετῶν. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the *Stromateis* and *Quis dives* are taken from the English translation by William Wilson (ANF 2).

² For more details, see e.g. Gellért Békés, *De continua oratione Clementis Alexandrini doctrina* (Studia anselmiana 14; Rome: Herder, 1942); idem, "Pura oratio apud Clementem Alexandrinum," in *Studia Benedictina in memoriam gloriosi ante saecula XIV transitus S.P. Benedicti* (Studia Anselmiana 18–19; Città del Vaticano: Libreria Vaticana, 1947), 157–172; André Méhat, "Prière. III: Dans la tradition chrétienne. A. Du 2^e siècle au concile de Nicée," *DSP* 12:2247–2256; Riemer Roukema, *Clemens van Alexandrië: Het gebed van de gnosticus en andere teksten* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1997); Alain Le Boulluec, "Les réflexions de Clément sur la prière et le traité d'Origène," in L. Perrone et al. (eds.), *Origeniana octava* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 397–407; Henny Fiskå Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism* (Oxford: University Press, 2006).

follows quite naturally from Clement's outline of assimilation to God and that the terminology of what Clement has to say about prayer relies very often on the Greek philosophical tradition, but, in substance, it is built on biblical foundations.

There are a number of passages in which Clement points out to his disciples who aspire to become real gnostics that perfection, in which one follows the model of the Lord, can only be achieved by doing such good as is not enforced by fear or motivated by reward (for that kind of attitude does not appertain to a Christian), but chosen freely for the sake of the good itself and guided by real, i.e. selfless, love.³ Love and fear exclude each other, as the apostle John had already said: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."⁴ Although this line is quoted only twice by Clement (*Strom.* IV 100, 5 and *Quis dives* 38, 1), it seems to play an important role in his conception of the spiritual development of a Christian. According to the Gospel, perfection does not consist in running away from evil: the repudiation of evil acts is only the first step of one's spiritual growth directed to conforming to the likeness of God, which culminates in the imitation of God's works.⁵ According to Clement, a fine example of this two-step development is Jesus' utterance addressed to the rich young man: the first, negative half of the line ("sell what you have") corresponds to the first step (repudiation), while the second half ("give to the poor") corresponds to the second (doing good).⁶

The dynamism in a Christian's life—detachment from the things of this world *because of* coming closer to God (διὰ τὴν πρὸς σέ οικείωσιν; not only in the sense of 'in order to be with you,' but also, and above all, in the sense of 'because I am with you')⁷ and the subsequent return to the world, not for one's own satisfaction, but in full awareness and readiness for attesting that in his generosity, God offers salvation to all men—corresponds to the basic theological conception of the *Gospel of John* (not being of the world, abiding in God and being sent into the world) and the *First Epistle of John* ("He who

³ See *Strom.* IV 135, 2–4; see also e.g. *Strom.* II 53, 2–5 and VII 73, 5.

⁴ 1 John 4:18: Φόβος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἀλλ' ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον, ὅτι ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει, ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τετελείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the Bible are from the New King James Version.

⁵ See *Strom.* IV 135, 1.4; 137, 1 and VI 60, 2–3; 103, 2–4; 164, 2.

⁶ See *Strom.* IV 28, 6–29, 2 (incl. a quotation from Matt 19:21).

⁷ See *Strom.* IV 148, 2.

says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked"),⁸ and Clement formulates it succinctly in the words of a prayer at the end of the fourth book of the *Stromateis*:

But I shall free myself (Homer, *Il.* X 378) from lust, let him say, O Lord, for the sake of alliance with you. For the economy of creation is good, and all things are well administered: nothing happens without a cause. I must be in what is yours, O Omnipotent One. And if I am there, I am near you. And I would be free of dependence that I may be able to draw near to you, and to be satisfied with little, practising your just choice between things beautiful and things like.⁹

Detachment from worldly things, expressed in the prayer by means of the Homeric formulation as being "free from lust" (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐμὲ λύσομαι τῆς ἐπιθυμίας), is not an expression of contempt for the world, but a consequence of a sensible choice of a man who, knowing God, knows as well that divine things do matter right here, in the created world. The similarity to the *First Epistle of John* is striking:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes (ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν), and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it (ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ); but he who does (ποιῶν) the will of God abides forever.¹⁰

A perfect Christian is not someone whose detachment from the world made it possible for him to achieve his desires, however holy and sublime they might be, namely to contemplate God and his hidden thoughts with a pure heart and to acquire *some* wisdom; rather than that, he is someone whom contemplation brings to the imitation of God's concrete *acting* love

⁸ 1John 2:6: ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιπάτησεν καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτως περιπατεῖν.

⁹ *Strom.* IV 148, 2: *Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐμὲ λύσομαι τῆς ἐπιθυμίας*, φήσει, διὰ τὴν πρὸς σέ οἰκείωσιν, κύριε. καλὴ γὰρ ἡ κτισθεῖσα δὴ οἰκονομία καὶ πάντα εὖ διοικεῖται, οὐδὲν ἀναιτίως γίνεται, ἐν τοῖς σοῖς εἶναι με δεῖ, παντοκράτορ· κἀν ἐνταῦθα ὦ, παρὰ σοί εἰμι· ἀδεῆς δ' εἶναι θέλω, ἵνα σοί συνεγγίξω δυνήθῃ, καὶ ὀλίγοις ἀρκεῖσθαι, μελετῶν τὴν σὴν ἐκλογὴν τὴν δικαίαν τῶν καλῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ὁμοίων. Translation modified.

¹⁰ 1John 2:15–17: Μὴ ἀγαπάτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· ὅτι πᾶς τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν. Καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

(εὐποιία, εὐεργεσία),¹¹ which eventually culminates in the merciful treatment of sinners.¹²

The inseparability of theory and practice is pointed out repeatedly,¹³ and the gnostic's triple task is mentioned in several passages: in the second book, Clement characterises the gnostic's mission as speculation (θεωρία), the fulfilment of the precepts (τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐπιτέλεις), and the forming of good men (ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν κατασκευή);¹⁴ similarly, in the seventh book, it is described as knowledge (τὸ γινώσκειν τὰ πράγματα), the performance of what the Word suggests (τὸ ἐπιτελεῖν ὃ τι ἂν ὁ λόγος ὑπαγορεύῃ) and the passing on of the secrets hidden in the truth (τὸ παραδιδόναι τὰ παρὰ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἐπιεκρυμμένα).¹⁵ The three effects of gnostic power seem to correspond to the power of God, which consists "in the exercise of inspection, of beneficence, of instruction."¹⁶

2. THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER AS A FORM SUI GENERIS OF THE Gnostic's DOING GOOD

It is not quite clear into which category the intercessory prayer for others falls; it seems to pervade everything the gnostic strives for: it is a prayer based on the *knowledge* of God, a prayer which *follows* the precepts of Jesus, and a prayer which *cares for* the benefit of others. The complex nature of this aspect of the gnostic's action is related to two facts: prayer is understood here not as a temporary manifestation of piety, but as a

¹¹ See *Strom.* II 102, 2 (quoted above); IV 29, 2: οὐκ ἀποχῇ κακῶν μόνον δικαιωθεῖς, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τῇ κυριακῇ τελειωθεὶς εὐποιᾶ (based on a quotation from Matt 19:20f.); IV 100, 4 (incl. a quotation from 1John 3:18f.); IV 137, 1: ἀγαθοποιία / εὐποιία. VI 60, 3: ἡ δικαιοσύνη εἰς ἐνέργειαν εὐποιίας προβαίνει. VI 103, 2.4: τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν / ἡ εἰς εὐποιαν ἐνέργεια. VI 164, 2 (incl. a quotation from Matt 5:20): τὸν πλησίον ἀγαπᾶν καὶ εὐεργετεῖν.

¹² This fact is pointed out by Veronika Černušková in her contribution to this volume. When Clement speaks of growing closer in likeness to God, he likes to refer to Matt 5:48: *Therefore you shall be perfect (or Luke 6:36: merciful), just as your Father in heaven is perfect.* See *Strom.* II 73, 3; 100, 4; IV 137, 3; VI 104, 1–2; VII 81, 1–3; 88, 4–7.

¹³ See e.g. *Strom.* I 166, 2–3; II 47, 4; IV 39, 1–2; 49, 7 (incl. a quotation from Rom 15:14); VII 102, 2; *Quis dives* 27, 3–28, 1.

¹⁴ *Strom.* II 46, 1.

¹⁵ *Strom.* VII 4, 2. See also VII 13, 2: service to God is aimed at the salvation of men and consists of three kinds of service: liturgical service, teaching, and doing good by one's own acts.

¹⁶ *Strom.* II 5, 5: Καὶ δὴ πάρεστιν αἰετὴ τῇ τε ἐποπτικῇ τῇ τε εὐεργετικῇ τῇ τε παιδευτικῇ ἀπτομένη ἡμῶν δυνάμει δυνάμεις τοῦ θεοῦ.

permanent state of contemplation,¹⁷ while beneficence is understood not as occasional good works, but as a permanent quality (ἐξίς).¹⁸ The ability to do good permanently is a direct consequence of the gnostic's likeness to God, who is "in the immutable state of the perpetual flow of good."¹⁹

As has been mentioned, according to Clement, the supreme manifestation of beneficence is merciful love. "He is a good man ... who pities ... and lends,"²⁰ Clement quotes the words of the psalm at the beginning of the sixth book in order to illustrate the spiritual task of those who make a decision in favour of real knowledge. It is clear that love, a virtue common to both God and men, is realised in various ways. The gnostic's beneficence, by means of which he imitates the works of God the Father,²¹ eventually means the forming of good men,²² and caring for the salvation of all,²³ but it consists of a wide array of partial activities, described in a more or less metaphorical way with various allusions to the Old and New Testament passages: searching, turning away from evil deeds, healing from the consequences of the fall, struggling with the snake, comforting,²⁴ enlightening, guarding, convicting, rebuking, encouraging, etc.²⁵ The gnostic's beneficence, firm and strong as the faith from Jesus' parable,²⁶ is capable of "removing the mountains of

¹⁷ See e.g. *Strom.* VII 10, 2; 56, 5; 57, 1.

¹⁸ See *Strom.* IV 137, 1: ... ὅτι καλὸν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖν, ἐκτενῶς ἢ ἐνέργεια φερομένη ἐν πάσῃ πράξει ἀγαθύνεται, οὐκ ἐφ' ὧν μέν, ἐφ' ὧν δ' οὐ, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐξεί ἐυποιίας καταστάσα ... IV 138, 3: Ἐπὶ δὲ ἐν ἐξεί ποιήσῃ τὸ εὐεργετητικόν, φύσιν ἀγαθοῦ μιμήσεται· ἡ δὲ διάθεσις καὶ φύσις ἔσται καὶ συνάσκησις. VI 60, 3: ἡ τελείωσις ἐν ἀμεταβόλῳ ἐξεί ἐυποιίας καθ' ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ θεοῦ διαμένει. VI 73, 5: ἐν τῇ μιᾷ ἐξεί μένει τῇ ἀμεταβόλῳ.

¹⁹ *Strom.* IV 151, 3: ... κατὰ τὴν ἀμετάτρεπτον τοῦ αἰὲ θεῖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἐξίν, see VI 104, 3.

²⁰ Ps. 111 (112):5-9; see *Strom.* VI 3, 3: Χρηστὸς ἀνὴρ ὁ οἰκτίρμων ... ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν.

²¹ This already appears in *Protr.* 86, 2, but mainly in *Strom.* VI 161, 1.6.

²² See mainly the passage concerning the "the attributes of kingly rule" in *Strom.* I 158, 1-3 and the note concerning the leading role of the gnostic in VI 161, 1 and VII 52, 1.

²³ See *Strom.* VI 46, 1-3.

²⁴ See *Protr.* 91, 3: καὶ ζητεῖ τὸ πλάσμα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰάται τὸ παράπτωμα καὶ διώκει τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὸν νεοττόν αὐθις ἀναλαμβάνει ἐπὶ τὴν καλιάν, ἀναπτῆναι παρορμών. 94, 1: οὐ παύεται προτρέπων, νοουθετῶν, παιδεύων, φιλῶν.

²⁵ See *Quis dives* 1, 4: τοῦτο δὲ λόγῳ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ σωτήρος ἰωμένους τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν, φωτίζοντας καὶ προσάγοντας ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας κτήσιν. 35, 1: Ἐνεργοὶ οὗτοι πάντες οἱ στρατιῶται καὶ φύλακες βέλαιοι, οὐδεὶς ἄργος, οὐδεὶς ἀχρεῖος. ὁ μὲν ἐξαιτήσασθαι σε δύναται παρὰ θεοῦ, ὁ δὲ παραμυθήσασθαι κάμνοντα, ὁ δὲ δακρύσαι καὶ στενάξει συμπαθῶς ὑπὲρ σοῦ πρὸς τὸν κύριον τῶν ὅλων, ὁ δὲ διδάξει τι τῶν πρὸς τὴν σωτηρίαν χρησίμων, ὁ δὲ νοουθετησάμετά παρρησίας. ὁ δὲ συμβουλευσάμετ' εὐνοίας, πάντες δὲ φιλεῖν ἀληθῶς, ἀδόλως, ἀφόβως, ἀνυποκρίτως, ἀκολακεύτως, ἀπλάστως, see also *Strom.* VII 44, 8 etc.

²⁶ See Matt 17:20 and 21:21.

his neighbours, and soothing the irregularities of their soul"²⁷—this all very often takes place or finds support in prayer.²⁸ The prerequisites, qualities, and goals of such prayer are presented in an unsystematic way, typical of Clement, and mainly in the sixth and seventh books of the *Stromateis*, in which the gnostic's profile is introduced. This theme was elaborated on in an original way in Clement's homily *Quis dives salvetur?*, particularly in its first part, in which, using the Gospel story of the calling of the rich young man, he made an attempt at creating a model of the church based on solidarity between the rich and the poor. Following a distinction of twofold poverty and richness,²⁹ material and moral, Clement arrives at a distribution of tasks specific for each group, arguing that beneficence is everybody's task, though not in equal shares.

3. THE PREREQUISITES OF THE GNOTIC'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

What, then, is the secret of the gnostic's intercessory prayer, which is *always* heard by God,³⁰ unlike the prayer of those who do not possess real knowledge and love?³¹ The reasons why the prayer is efficacious are given in a concise way in the seventh book, at the beginning of the passage concerned with the topic discussed here. Both the disciples of Prodicus' sect, who maintain proudly that there is no need for them to pray,³² and those Christians whose faith has faded are reminded here: "For as God can do all that He wishes, so the gnostic receives all that he asks."³³ How should we interpret this optimistic statement?

The guarantee and prerequisite of the success of everything the gnostic undertakes, his intercessions included, consists in God's unconditional eternal love of all people,³⁴ in which the gnostic can participate. In *Strom.* II 96, 3–4, Clement, following the biblical line "it is He who gives you power to

²⁷ *Strom.* VII 77, 4: τὰ ὄρη μεθιστάς τῶν πλησίων (cf. 1 Cor 13:2 and Matt 17:20) καὶ τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῶν ἀνωμαλίας ἀποβάλλων (see Isa 40:4). Translation modified.

²⁸ See especially the passage in *Strom.* VII 41 ff. and the two passages in *Quis dives* 1, 5 and 34, 3–4.

²⁹ See e.g. *Quis dives* 17, 2–5.

³⁰ See *Strom.* VII 41, 3: ὃ μόνῳ ἢ αἰτήσις κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ βούλησιν ἀπονενεμημένη γίνεται. VII 44, 5: καὶ ἔχων ἅμα καὶ εὐχόμενος. VII 73, 1: πάντως οὐ βούλεται τεύξεσθαι.

³¹ See *Strom.* VII 44, 1–2 and 73, 3.

³² See *Strom.* VII 41, 1.

³³ *Strom.* VII 41, 4: ὥσπερ γὰρ πᾶν ὃ βούλεται, δύναται ὁ θεός, οὕτως πᾶν ὃ ἂν αἰτήσῃ, ὁ γνωστικὸς λαμβάνει.

³⁴ See e.g. *Protr.* 2, 3; *Strom.* V 18, 7, and especially VII 6, 5–8, 1.

get wealth,"³⁵ explains that a Christian, who accepts all good gifts from God, is to become a servant to the grace of God, i.e., he is to give to others what he has been given by God. Such is the nature of the grace of God and its gifts: they are for the common good (κοινωφελείς).³⁶ In the seventh book, Clement expresses the same idea of the gradual distribution of grace from God to men by means of the image of the Heracleian stone (magnetite),³⁷ comparing the magnetic force to the Holy Spirit.³⁸ As a man who bears God and is borne by God (θεοφορῶν καὶ θεοφορούμενος),³⁹ the gnostic becomes the instrument of the goodness of God (ὄργανον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθότητος),⁴⁰ and his thoughts are inspired by God in him, because the will of God is conveyed to his soul in some way.⁴¹ This process is described as follows: divine power "breathes in men's thoughts and reasonings, and puts in their hearts strength and a keener perception."⁴² A more succinct expression can be found in the seventh book, this time as part of the discussion of prayer: "[he] retains in his soul the permanent power of the objects of his contemplation, that is, the perspicacious keenness of knowledge."⁴³ In his choice of words and metaphors elucidating the nature of the grace which is spread from God towards men, Clement is very ingenious and, considering his liking for John's theology (though this is unexpressed), it is not surprising that the "divine power of goodness," which "settles" in the gnostic because of his incessant contact with God, becomes a light in the soul of the righteous one.⁴⁴ The soul penetrated with the light, i.e. with divine power in fact,⁴⁵ thus

³⁵ Deut 8:18 (LXX): αὐτός σοι δίδωσιν ἰσχύον τοῦ ποιῆσαι δύναμιν.

³⁶ See *Strom.* II 97, 1–2.

³⁷ *Strom.* VII 9, 1–4, esp. 4. See also Clement's concept of a 'double image' in *Strom.* VII 16, 6 and *Protr.* 98, 4; *Paed.* I 98, 2–3; *Strom.* IV 30, 1–3 and V 94, 5.

³⁸ *Strom.* VII 9, 4.

³⁹ *Strom.* VII 82, 2; see also VI 104, 1.

⁴⁰ *Strom.* VII 81, 7.

⁴¹ See *Strom.* VI 157, 4.

⁴² *Strom.* VI 161, 3: ὅτε δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐπινοίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τοὺς ἐπιλογισμοὺς ἐμπνεῖ τι καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἐντίθησι ταῖς φρεσὶν ἰσχύον τε καὶ συναίσθησιν ἀκριβεστέραν.

⁴³ *Strom.* VII 44, 6: ἔμμενον δὲ τὴν τῶν θεωρητῶν δύναμιν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ κεκτημένος, τουτέστι τὴν διορατικὴν τῆς ἐπιστήμης δριμύτημα.

⁴⁴ See *Strom.* III 44, 3: οὐ γὰρ λόγον ψιλὸν εἶναι τὴν γνώσιν φαμεν, ἀλλὰ τινα ἐπιστήμην θεῖαν καὶ φῶς ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἐγγενόμενον ... VI 104, 1: ὅσον ἀπαυγάσματος νοεροῦ καθάπερ ἡλιακῆς ἀλέας ἐναποσημαίνεται τι, δικαιοσύνης σφραγίδα ἐπιφανή, φῶς ἡνωμένον ψυχῇ δι' ἀγάπης ἀδιαστάτου. VI 105, 1: φωτεινός δὲ ἦδη καὶ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος λάμπων. VII 57, 5: ἐσόμενος, ὡς εἰπεῖν, φῶς ἐστός καὶ μένος ἀδίδως, πάντῃ πάντως ἄτρεπτον. VII 79, 5: οὐ γὰρ μετουσίᾳ θερμότητος θερμὸς οὐδὲ πυρὸς φωτεινός, ἀλλ' εἶναι ὁλος φῶς βούλεται. On the parallels in John's works, see e.g. 1 John 1:5: ... ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία or John 1:4f.: ... καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνεται.

⁴⁵ See *Strom.* VII 37, 4.6 etc.

becomes—“as far as permitted to human nature”—as perfect as the Father who is in heaven;⁴⁶ in other words, it keeps doing good as the gnostic’s “perfection abides in the fixed habit of well-doing.”⁴⁷

However, the continuity between the giving God and his giving servant, and, consequently, the power and strength of the latter’s intercessory prayer, also depends on the effort with which men strive for assimilation to God, namely on the process of transformation, which takes places in three different areas with men: speech, volition, and action,⁴⁸ a transformation which brings about inner purity in the gnostic and leads to complete assimilation of the loving one to the object of his love.⁴⁹

4. THE QUALITY OF THE GNOTIC’S INTERCESSORY PRAYER: A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE WILL OF GOD

The fact that Clement speaks of the gnostic’s prayer as a permanent state of contemplation is related to two other aspects of his teaching: he regards prayer as an *oratio continua*,⁵⁰ defining it as ὁμιλία πρὸς τὸν θεόν.⁵¹ Both find their expression in the description of the special qualities of the gnostic’s intercessory prayer: the one who knows God persists in his prayer⁵² and his close friendship with God ensures him a certain ease in communication. Clement spends a significant amount of time describing how God “hears” the pleas of men at the moment of thought.⁵³ In order to illustrate this, Clement employs the alleged statement of Jesus in several passages, with minor alterations: “Ask ... and I will do it; think, and I will give.”⁵⁴

⁴⁶ *Strom.* VI 104, 2 (incl. a reference to Matt 5:48).

⁴⁷ *Strom.* VI 60, 3: τοῦτῳ ἢ τελείωσις ἐν ἀμεταβόλῳ ἔξει εὐποιίας καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ θεοῦ διαμένει.

⁴⁸ See *Strom.* II 97, 3–4.

⁴⁹ See *Strom.* VI 76, 1: ὅλως ἤδη συνόντι τῷ ἐραστῷ; see also VI 71, 4–72, 2.

⁵⁰ See *Strom.* VI 102, 1: εὐχεται τοίνυν ὁ γνωστικός καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐννοιαν πᾶσαν τὴν ὥραν. VII 35, 3: ... ἀλλὰ τὸν πάντα βίον ὁ γνωστικός ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ. VII 40, 3: εἰ δὲ τινες καὶ ὥρας τακτὰς ἀπονέμουσιν εὐχῇ, ὡς τρίτην φέρε καὶ ἕκτην καὶ ἐνάτην, ἀλλ’ οὐν γε ὁ γνωστικός παρὰ ὅλον εὐχεται τὸν βίον. VII 49, 7: ὁ δὲ καὶ περιπάτῳ χρώμενος καὶ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡσυχία καὶ ἀναγνώσει καὶ τοῖς κατὰ λόγον κατὰ πάντα τρόπον εὐχεται. VII 73, 1: εὐχῇ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὁ βίος ἅπας καὶ ὁμιλία πρὸς θεόν. For more details, see Békés, *De continua oratione*.

⁵¹ See *Strom.* VII 39, 6 and 42, 1.

⁵² See *Quis dives* 1, 5; 41, 5.

⁵³ See *Strom.* VII 37, 4; 41, 3; 43, 2–5; 49, 7.

⁵⁴ *Strom.* VI 78, 1: αἰτῆσαι καὶ ποιήσω· ἐννοήθητι καὶ δώσω, see VI 101, 4; VII 73, 1. For more details, see Alfred Resch, *Agrapha. Aussercanonische Schriftfragmente* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), 103 (logion 14).

The gnostic's dwelling with God, as has been said, brings about a keener perception, which also includes the knowledge of what God wills. Such knowledge guarantees that the gnostic's prayer is meaningful. The difference between him and the attitude of a simple believer, who *fulfils* the will of God as a mere servant obeying the Lord's orders, consists in the fact that the gnostic *knows* what his Lord is doing (and wills to do); through his knowledge, he participates in the will of God, being able to "taste" it (γεύεται).⁵⁵ He is no longer called a servant, but a son of God.⁵⁶ One does not have to go far to find the model: "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does *not* know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have *made known* to you."⁵⁷ "Beloved, now we are children of God,"⁵⁸ is what the apostle John, the one whom Clement admires as a model of all spiritual care, says in his epistle.⁵⁹ The chance that the prayer will be heard by God is thus good because, in the first place, "[God] does not hold out against His children when they beg His pity,"⁶⁰ and second, because there is an agreement between the intentions of the beseeching one and of the giver: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."⁶¹

Let us now have a more detailed look at how Clement understands the knowledge of the will of God and how it will become apparent in prayer. In *Strom.* VI 61, 1 Clement defines knowledge as the "apprehension of things present, future, and past, which is sure and reliable."⁶² Thus a man who has acquired knowledge does "not [have] the future indistinct ... but [has] grasped by gnostic faith what is hidden from others."⁶³ In other words, what

⁵⁵ *Strom.* VII 60, 3.

⁵⁶ See *Strom.* VII 78, 4–79, 1.

⁵⁷ John 15:15: οὐκέτι λέγω ὑμᾶς δούλους, ὅτι ὁ δούλος οὐκ οἶδεν τί ποιεῖ αὐτοῦ ὁ κύριος· ὑμᾶς δὲ εἵρηκα φίλους, ὅτι πάντα ἃ ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐγνώρισα ὑμῖν.

⁵⁸ 1 John 3:2: ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν.

⁵⁹ High regard for the apostle John is especially apparent in the final chapters of Clement's homily *Quis dives salvetur*; for more details, see Éric Junod, "Un écho d'un controverse autour de la pénitence: l'histoire de l'apôtre Jean et du chef des brigands chez Clément d'Alexandrie (QDS 42,1–15)," *RHPPhR* 60 (1980) 153–160; Maria Grazia Bianco, *Quale ricco si salverà?* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1999), 68 f., n. 104 and 109 f.

⁶⁰ *Quis dives* 41, 5: οὐ γὰρ ἀντέχει τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτοῦ τὰ σπλάγχνα δεομένοις.

⁶¹ 1 John 5:14: καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτόν ὅτι ἐὰν τι αἰτῶμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν.

⁶² *Strom.* VI 61, 1: ἐπιστήμη οὖσα καὶ κατάληψις τῶν ὄντων τε καὶ ἐσομένων καὶ παρωχνηκῶν βεβαία καὶ ἀσφαλής. Similarly also further in *Strom.* VI 78, 6; 70, 4 and 92, 3 (both incl. a quotation of Wis 8:8).

⁶³ See *Strom.* VI 76, 4: οὐχ ἔχων δυστέκμαρτον τὸ μέλλον, καθάπερ οἱ πολλοὶ στοχαζόμενοι βιοῦσιν, ἀπειληφῶς δὲ διὰ πίστεως γνωστικῆς, ὃ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀδηλον.

he has believed in and what he hopes for are already present for him: he “goes to meet the future,”⁶⁴ having a faculty of vision.⁶⁵ In the seventh book, Clement mentions a close connection between the gnostic’s piety and the providence of God, which makes it possible for the gnostic not only to foresee God’s works, but also—through his knowledge—make the divine providential care for the world present in the world.⁶⁶ Therefore, formed in the likeness of the Teacher, he becomes “a god going about in flesh.”⁶⁷

In practice, this means that the gnostic does not pray for the goods of this world, which only seem good,⁶⁸ but, participating in the real good, he *knows* what he should ask for,⁶⁹ and endeavours not to lose the gift of knowledge of the real good.⁷⁰ As a deterrent negative example there is the meaningless prayer of those who live in ignorance and ask either those who are not gods, or ask for what is actually not good.⁷¹ Not every plea is worthy of the gnostic; the most complete list of appropriate pleas which follow the spiritual progress of the Christian from the moment when he starts to believe until he reaches perfection is given in *Strom.* VI 102, 1–2:

And first he will ask forgiveness of sins; and after, that he may sin no more; and further, the power of well-doing and of comprehending the whole creation and administration by the Lord, that, becoming *pure in heart* (Matt 5:8) through the knowledge, which is by the Son of God, he may be initiated into the beatific vision *face to face* (1 Cor 13:12).⁷²

When comparing this list with the list given in another passage, *Strom.* VII 79, 3–4, we may conclude that according to Clement, the foundation of the gnostic’s prayers, which include the past, present, and future of each man, consists in the gnostic’s prayer for the forgiveness of sins (i.e. the first conversion related to the gift of faith); occupying a middle position, as it were, there is a prayer for abiding in the state of sinlessness; and, finally,

⁶⁴ See *Strom.* VI 77, 1–2: ἐνεστὸς ἤδη τὸ μέλλον ... ὁ δὲ τὴν ἐν οἷς ἐστὶ κατὰστασιν βεβαίαν τῶν μελλόντων κατάληψιν εἰδὼς δι’ ἀγάπης προαπαντᾷ τῷ μέλλοντι.

⁶⁵ See *Strom.* VII 79, 2–4.

⁶⁶ See *Strom.* VII 42, 2–3 and 70, 8.

⁶⁷ See *Strom.* VII 101, 4: ἐν σαρκὶ περιπολῶν θεός (a quotation from Empedocles, fr. 112, 4, D–K).

⁶⁸ Such a prayer is in fact harmful (see *Strom.* VII 44, 1–2).

⁶⁹ See *Strom.* VII 49, 5.

⁷⁰ See *Strom.* VI 78, 4 and VII 38, 2–4.

⁷¹ See *Strom.* VII 39, 2.

⁷² *Strom.* VI 102, 1–2: Καὶ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἄφεςιν ἁμαρτιῶν αἰτήσεται, μετὰ δὲ τὸ μηκέτι ἁμαρτάνειν ἔτι τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν δύνασθαι καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν κατὰ τὸν κύριον δημιουργίαν τε καὶ οἰκονομίαν συνιέναι, ἵνα δὴ, καθαρὸς τὴν καρδίαν γενόμενος δι’ ἐπιγνώσεως τῆς διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον τὴν μακαρίαν θεῶν μνηθῇ.

there is a prayer for knowledge (i.e. actually a second conversion, which will be fulfilled in the gift of eternal life).

The gnostic's intercessory prayer is concerned with both himself and other people. The real sage thus does not ask only for his own conversion, or persistence in gnostic faith,⁷³ but also prays for the same for others, as he wants others to be like him in his prophetic prayer.⁷⁴ For Clement, the model of a prayer asking for faith and knowledge for others is Jesus' High-Priestly prayer, its first part in particular, in which before his death and his return to the Father the Lord prayed for the men who are in the world that they will be given eternal life, i.e., know God the Father, in order that the Son might glorify the Father and the Father might glorify the Son.⁷⁵ By the same token, the gnostic prays "that as many as possible might attain knowledge; that in the saved, by salvation, through knowledge, God might be glorified."⁷⁶ An important part, or even the foundation of the intercessory prayer, is gratitude (εὐχαριστία),⁷⁷ which is also present in Jesus' High-Priestly prayer:⁷⁸ gratitude not only for what God has already given in his goodness, but also, and above all, for what he will do. The reason for this joyful gratitude of a praying man lies in his knowledge, thanks to which he accepts in advance what he is praying for.⁷⁹

By referring to a supremely trustworthy example, namely the prayer of God himself, Clement mainly aims to stop the pride and folly of the disciples of Prodicus' sect, whose blasphemous position was inspired by the Cyrenaics.⁸⁰ At the same time, however, he probably also wants to prevent the possible doubts and speculations of faltering believers, who are at a loss to decide whether praying to God is of any use at all, as some might arrive at this conclusion because God can see even the most hidden of our thoughts,⁸¹ and, second, because God's distribution of good things does not depend on our requests at all.⁸²

⁷³ See *Strom.* VI 78, 4; VII 44, 3–4; 46, 4–5.

⁷⁴ See *Strom.* VI 77, 3–4.

⁷⁵ See John 17:1–10.

⁷⁶ See *Strom.* VII 41, 7: ἡ καὶ ὁ κύριος ἠϋχετο, εὐχαριστῶν μὲν ἐφ' οἷς ἐτελείωσεν τὴν διακονίαν, εὐχόμενος δὲ ὡς πλείστους ὄσους ἐν ἐπιγνώσει γενέσθαι, ἵν' ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις διὰ τῆς σωτηρίας κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν ὁ θεὸς δοξάζεται καὶ ὁ μόνος ἀγαθὸς καὶ ὁ μόνος σωτὴρ δι' υἱοῦ ἐξ αἰῶνος εἰς αἰῶνα ἐπιγινώσκῃται. Translation modified.

⁷⁷ See *Strom.* VII 41, 6.

⁷⁸ See John 17:4.

⁷⁹ See *Strom.* VII 43, 1.

⁸⁰ See *Strom.* VII 41, 1–2.

⁸¹ See *Strom.* VII 43, 4.

⁸² See *Strom.* VII 41, 6–8.

5. THE CULMINATION OF THE Gnostic's INTERCESSORY PRAYER: A PRAYER FOR ENEMIES

After he has proved the necessity of prayer in his exposition of real piety and praised the qualities of a Christian prayer, in contrast to the attempts at prayer made by the Greeks, characterised by superstitiousness and false piety, Clement goes on to the exposition of perfection, following the line in Matt 5:48. The culmination of the gnostic's assimilation to God, who mercifully loves all people, including the sinners who insult him, comes when the Christian forgives and prays for his enemies in his prayer.⁸³ Clement's arguments in favour of prayer for enemies are based on the words of the apostle Paul in the sixth chapter of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* and on Jesus' statements in the Gospel (especially Matt 5:44 f. and par.), for Clement feels obliged to fulfil these words.⁸⁴ Apart from these lines from the Gospel, Clement also refers to an *agraphon* of Jesus: "Whom I shall strike, do thou pity,"⁸⁵ and the words concerning boundless forgiveness in Matt 18:22.⁸⁶

Can there be a greater fruit of the gnostic's permanent virtue, which is the consequence of his knowledge, than the practice of prayer for enemies? Only those who have attained knowledge bow to all people as God's creation and respect the Saviour's action which is to come: it is because of his knowledge of the merciful love of God and his assimilation to the good providence of God that the gnostic knows that someone who is an enemy at present may become a believer, which makes it possible for the gnostic to regard such a person as a prospective friend of God.⁸⁷

Unlike those who content themselves with a lower degree of perfection than the Lord mentions in the Gospel, the gnostic never takes revenge, never asks the Lord for retribution for the wrongs which his persecutors have done to him, and does not pray *against* his enemies (κατὰ τοῦ ἀδικήσαντος), but *for* them (ὕπὲρ τῶν ἐχθρῶν).⁸⁸ He shows clemency (χρηστεύειν)⁸⁹ and pities (οἰκτεῖρῶν) even the unrepentant ones who are chastised after death.⁹⁰

⁸³ See *Strom.* VII 81ff.

⁸⁴ See *Strom.* IV 95, 1; VII 84, 5; 85, 2 etc.

⁸⁵ See *Strom.* VII 74, 5: ὃν ἐγὼ πατάξω, σὺ ἐλέησον; cf. Jean Ruwet, "Les *agrapha* dans les œuvres de Clément d'Alexandrie," *Biblica* 30 (1949) 149.

⁸⁶ See *Strom.* VII 85, 2.

⁸⁷ See *Strom.* VII 86, 1–2.5.

⁸⁸ See *Strom.* VII 84, 5–7.

⁸⁹ An allusion to 1 Cor. 13:4; see *Strom.* VII 85, 2.

⁹⁰ See *Strom.* VII 78, 3.

In *Quis dives*, the merciful love of God is presented as an example worth following. Here the description of the intercessory prayer⁹¹ makes use of a rich language corresponding to the overall style of Clement's work, and reveals the fighting spirit of the intercession. The external manifestation of the intercessory prayer consists in the laying on of hands (χειρῶν ἐπιβολή),⁹² while the inner prerequisites are piety and the persistence of the praying soul, strengthened by asceticism (namely, by fasting), because the soul must be pure (καθαρά), strong (εὐρωστος), and smart ("anointed with ointment," λιπαρά).⁹³ The intercession may also have the character of beseeching (ἐξαίτεισθαι, δεήσεισθαι),⁹⁴ influencing the Father with magic litanies (μαγεύειν τὸν πάτερα),⁹⁵ weeping and groaning in sympathy in front of the Lord of all (δακρύειν καὶ στενάζειν συμπαθῶς πρὸς τὸν κύριον τῶν ὅλων),⁹⁶ or even a strenuous command (προστάγμα σύντονον)—if the might of demons is to be crushed.⁹⁷

Clement's homily culminates in the famous *exemplum* from the life of the apostle John. Clement seems to be quite insistent that the reader should know that it is not a 'tale' but a 'narrative'⁹⁸ of a true story which goes back to the first disciples of Jesus. The moving story of John's pastoral work, which is usually regarded as part of some early tradition, perhaps parallel to the one which became the core of the apocryphal *Acts of John*,⁹⁹ has its climax in the description of the second conversion of the young robber: the apostle's persistence in the prayer for his salvation and the courageous spirit which makes him say, following Jesus: "If need be, I will willingly endure thy death,"¹⁰⁰ have their unmistakable parallel in the *First Epistle of John*: "By this

⁹¹ *Quis dives* 1, 4–6; 34, 3–5 and 42, 13–15.

⁹² Apart from *Quis dives* 34, 3, see also the practical advice in *Strom.* III 5 (here, however, as a quotation from Isidore's *Ethics*).

⁹³ See *Quis dives* 1, 5 and 41, 6.

⁹⁴ *Quis dives* 1, 4; 41, 5–6; 42, 15.

⁹⁵ *Quis dives* 41, 5.

⁹⁶ *Quis dives* 35, 1.

⁹⁷ *Quis dives* 34, 3.

⁹⁸ See *Quis dives* 42, 1: ἀκουσον μῦθον οὐ μῦθον, ἀλλὰ ὄντα λόγον περὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἀποστόλου παραδεδομένον καὶ μνήμη πεφυλαγμένον. On Plato's terms μῦθος and λόγος (cf. Plato, *Gorg.* 523a; *Prot.* 324d), see Carlo Nardi, "Reminiscence platoniche nel *Quis dives salvetur* di Clemente Alessandrino. Il racconto del giovane brigante," *Annali del Dipartimento di Filosofia dell'Università di Firenze* 5 (1989) 92–95.

⁹⁹ For more details, see e.g. Bianco, *Quale ricco si salverà?*, 70 n. 110. On the further development of this early Christian tradition concerning the apostle John, see Carlo Nardi, "La fortuna del *Quis dives salvetur*. Il racconto del giovane brigante," in *Clemente Alessandrino, Quale ricco si salva? Il cristiano e l'economia* (Rome: Borla, 1991), 117–172.

¹⁰⁰ *Quis dives* 42, 13: ἂν δέη, τὸν σὸν θάνατον ἐκὼν ὑπομενῶ. On the substitutional character

we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.”¹⁰¹

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the seventh book, Clement defends himself against the possible denunciation of his coreligionists as follows: “But if the assertions made by us appear to certain of the multitude to be different from the Scriptures of the Lord, let it be known that it is from that source that they have breath and life.”¹⁰² As I have tried to demonstrate to those who might think that Clement’s gnostic follows the teaching of Greek philosophers rather than the precepts of Jesus, the key passages in Clement’s treatise on perfection actually do “have breath and life” from the Scriptures, Johannine writings in particular: in the exposition of the intercessory prayer in the seventh book of the *Stromateis*, the source is Jesus’ prayer for his disciples which appears in the seventeenth chapter of the *Gospel of John*, while in the case of *Quis dives* it is the *First Epistle of John* and probably another ancient tradition as well. Finally, the overall conception of the loving and beloved children of God, as presented in several passages to those of Clement’s readers who have the ambition to achieve perfection, has, in my opinion, clearly found a model in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the *First Epistle of John*; the number of explicit references does not prove decisive in this respect.

of the gnostic’s prayer, see *Strom.* VII 80, 1: τὰ μὲν τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἀμαρτήματα μερίσασθαι εὐχόμενος.

¹⁰¹ 1John 3:16: ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι, see also 1John 4:9–11: Ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι’ αὐτοῦ. ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήκαμεν τὸν θεόν ἀλλ’ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. Ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν. Translation modified.

¹⁰² *Strom.* VII 1, 4: Κἂν ἑτεροῖά τισι τῶν πολλῶν καταφαίνεται τὰ ὑφ’ ἡμῶν λεγόμενα τῶν κυριακῶν γραφῶν, ἰστέον ὅτι ἐκεῖθεν ἀναπνεῖ τε καὶ ζῇ.

SAINT PAUL AS APOSTLE OF *APATHEIA*:
STROMATEIS VII, CHAPTER 14

Judith L. Kovacs

INTRODUCTION

Clement is a link in the tradition of Alexandrian exegesis that stretches from Philo to Origen and beyond—a link whose importance has yet to be fully recognized.¹ Although he did not write the kind of scriptural commentaries we have from his predecessor Philo and his successor Origen,² Clement's surviving works are full of scriptural citations and allusions. Most of his exegetical comments are brief, but he does provide a few samples of verse-by-verse exegesis of specific biblical texts. For example, in each of the last four books of his *Stromateis*, he dedicates a chapter to detailed exegesis of a biblical text, two from the Old Testament and two from the New. In *Strom.* V 32–40 (chapter 6), as an example of how “the Law and the Prophets” speak in “enigmas,” he sets forth a symbolic interpretation of the tabernacle described in Exodus 25–38,³ and in *Strom.* VI 133–148 (chapter 16)

¹ On Clement's debt to Philo see Anniewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); David T. Runia, “Clement of Alexandria and the Philonic Doctrine of the Divine Powers,” *VChr* 58 (2004), 256–276. The question of Origen's indebtedness to Clement, in his exegesis as well as his theology, has received surprisingly little attention.

² His *Hypotyposes*, of which only a few fragments have come down to us, seems to have been a collection of exegetical notes; see André Méhat, *Étude sur les Stromates de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 200. In volume III of the GCS edition of Clement's works (1970) Stählin and Früchtel print only a few surviving fragments of this work (fragments 1–23 on pages 195–202); others have argued that fragment 24 (pages 203–215) = “Adumbrationes Clementis Alexandrini in Epistolas Canonicas,” preserved in a Latin translation by Cassiodorus, also belonged to this work. In “Die wunderliche Mär von zwei Logoï. Clemens Alexandrinus, Frgm. 23—Zeugniss eines Arius ante Arium oder des arianischen Streits selbst?” in H. Ch. Brennecke, E. L. Grasmück, C. Marksches (eds.), *Logos. Festschrift für Luise Abramowski* (BZNW 67; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 193–217, Christoph Marksches calls into question the authenticity of Stählin's fragment 23, which comes from Photius. Clement's *Eclogae prophetae* consists of brief exegetical comments.

³ Here Clement also gives a symbolic interpretation of the description of the garments of the high priest in Exodus 28. On this chapter see Judith L. Kovacs, “Concealment and Gnostic Exegesis: Clement of Alexandria's Interpretation of the Tabernacle,” *SP* 31 (1997) 414–437.

he considers the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1–17) in an example of “gnostic interpretation” (VI 133, 1). The other two chapters are early examples of the spiritual exegesis of New Testament texts, one each from the Gospels and the letters of Paul. In *Strom.* IV, chapter 6, Clement explicates the beatitudes of Matthew 5, finding in them a description of how the soul becomes perfect and ascends to God.⁴ The final sample exegesis, in *Strom.* VII 84–88 (chapter 14) explores the deeper meaning of Paul’s discussion of lawsuits and fornication in 1 Corinthians 6.

This last chapter is the focus of the present essay. I will trace the main lines of Clement’s interpretation, with particular attention to three questions:

1. Why does Clement choose this text, and how does his exegesis of it function in the context of the whole of *Stromateis* VII?
2. What help does Clement find in Platonic and Stoic philosophy as he seeks to spell out the deeper meaning of Paul’s words?
3. How does this chapter exemplify Clement’s inner biblical exegesis?

1. FIRST CORINTHIANS 6 IN THE CONTEXT OF *STROMATEIS* VII

First the context: At the beginning of *Stromateis* VII Clement states that the purpose of this book is to demonstrate to “the Greeks,” in particular to “the philosophers” among them, that they are totally mistaken when they accuse Christians of atheism (VII 1, 1). In fact, Clement asserts, it is the perfect Christian, whom he calls ‘the gnostic,’ who is the only truly pious person (VII 1, 1). He argues this point through a lengthy description of such features of the gnostic’s life as his prayer (VII 35, 1–49, 8), which is superior to any sacrifice, and his perfection in virtue, which makes him a divine ‘image,’ superior to any cult statue (VII 52, 2).⁵ Clement says that because his primary intended audience here is Greek philosophers he will rely mainly on rational arguments, instead of quoting Scripture (VII 1, 2–3). The extended exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6 in chapter 14 (VII 84, 1–88, 7) is the major exception to

⁴ *Strom.* IV 25–41, discussed in Judith L. Kovacs, “Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa on the Beatitudes,” in H.R. Drobner and A. Viciano (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa, Homilies on the Beatitudes* (VChr Suppl. 52; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 311–329.

⁵ Alain le Boulluec (ed.), Clément d’Alexandrie, *Les Stromates: Stromate VII* (SC 428; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), 9–20, divides this discussion into two parts: the response to the charge of atheism (VII 1, 1–54, 4) and a description of the perfect virtue of the Christian gnostic (VII 55, 1–88, 7).

this rule.⁶ Clement adduces this text at the completion of his apology to the Greeks (VII 84, 1),⁷ claiming it as evidence that the perfect Christian exemplifies the Greek virtue of ἀπάθεια.⁸

On first reading, 1 Corinthians 6 seems a very odd choice for the capstone of Clement's argument with 'the Greeks.' This chapter consists of four sections: in the first six verses Paul criticizes the Corinthians for bringing their disputes into pagan lawcourts instead of adjudicating them themselves. In verses 7–8 he then gives the more radical rule that engaging in lawsuits of any kind is a serious moral failing. It is better, he says, to suffer injustice, than to press charges in any human forum. Then in verses 9–11 Paul lists examples of unrighteous conduct that lead to exclusion from the kingdom of God, reminding the Corinthians that in baptism they have "washed themselves and been sanctified and made righteous." The chapter concludes in verses 12–20 with discussion of another specific issue that had arisen in Corinth, the claim of some Christians that they are free to do whatever they want, including sleeping with prostitutes—a claim Paul opposes by reminding the Corinthians that they are "the body of Christ" and "a temple of the Holy Spirit."

It is not surprising that Clement appeals to Paul. For Clement Paul is "the Apostle" (*Strom.* VII 58, 4; 75, 3; 84, 1–88, 7), and "the divine Apostle" (VII 84, 3); he quotes Paul very frequently as the greatest of human authorities.⁹ But if Clement wanted to give his readers an impressive example of Paul's teaching on gnostic perfection, why did he not quote the moving description of love as "bearing all things" in 1 Corinthians 13? Or perhaps Paul's words about "pressing on toward the upward calling" in Phil 3:13–14,

⁶ See also the interpretation of Lev 11:3–4 in VII 109, 1–110, 3. As Le Boulluec (*Stromate VII*, 14 f.) points out, while direct citation of Scripture is limited in *Stromateis VII*, the book still contains many allusions to, and summaries of biblical texts.

⁷ *Strom.* VII 84, 1: "Let these things be spoken to the Greeks concerning the gnostic, in the briefest possible compass, to serve as seed for further thought." Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the *Stromateis* are my own translations.

⁸ *Strom.* VII 84, 2: "And further, of our gnostic's freedom from the passions [Chadwick: apathy], if I may use the term, according to which the perfecting of the believer advances through love till it arrives at the perfect man, at the measure of the stature (Eph 4:13), being made like to God and having become truly equal to the angels (Luke 20:36)—of this freedom from the passions many other evidences from Scripture occur to me which I might adduce, but I think it better to defer so ambitious an attempt owing to the length of the discussion, leaving the task to those who are willing to take pains in elaborating the doctrines by extracts from Scripture. One Scripture however I will briefly refer to, so as not to leave the topic altogether unnoticed." Translation from Henry Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity* (LCC 2; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954).

⁹ There are frequent allusions to, or paraphrases of, Pauline texts in *Stromateis VII*.

which so inspired Gregory of Nyssa in his portrayal of the spiritual life as eternal progress?¹⁰ Why did Clement choose a text where Paul is concerned with such mundane matters as lawsuits and fornication? Was it precisely because its concerns seem so mundane—and thus the spelling-out of the higher, spiritual meaning of Paul's counsel would serve as a *tour de force* demonstration of the value of symbolic exegesis—rather as Origen was to say that the rough or offensive places in Scripture are designed as clues that one must seek a higher meaning?¹¹ Or was it, as Alain Le Boulluec suggests, because of the motif of the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' which appears 1 Cor 6:19?¹² I shall return to this question later.

2. OVERVIEW OF CLEMENT'S EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 6

I turn now to Clement's text, which adduces 1 Corinthians 6 as a witness that the perfect Christian, the gnostic, fulfills the ideal of ἀπάθεια, 'freedom from the passions.'¹³ He begins by reminding his readers that not all Christians are gnostics, adding that believers can progress towards perfection (VII 84, 1). Then he cites phrases from two other New Testament texts that speak of this perfection, "equal to the angels" from Luke 20:36 and "perfect man" from Eph 4:13.¹⁴ Clement next goes through 1 Corinthians 6, treating thirteen of the twenty verses. What interests him is not the concrete problems of lawsuits and fornication. In fact he allegorizes the discussion of fornication in 1 Cor 6:12–20, understanding the 'body' as the church which is "the body of Christ,"¹⁵ and taking 'fornication' as a metaphor for idolatry, that is reversion to pagan ways. (On this last point he may well be guided by the language of the Old Testament prophets.¹⁶) Clement's primary concern is to probe behind the surface message of Paul's words to discern what the text says about the inner state of the soul and how it can become perfect.

¹⁰ "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ" (RSV). See, e.g., Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilia in Canticum 12; De vita Moysis II 225–230*.

¹¹ See *Princ.* IV 2, 7–8.

¹² Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*, 259, n. 3.

¹³ The word could also be translated 'impassibility' or 'unperturbability.'

¹⁴ Clement quotes Eph 4:13 at the beginning of the chapter and alludes to it at the end.

¹⁵ This interpretation draws on verses 15–17, understood in light of texts such as Eph 1:22–23 that explicitly identify the 'church' as the 'body of Christ.'

¹⁶ The prophets make frequent use of the image of 'harlotry' to designate idolatry, see, e.g., Jer 3, Hos 1–3, and Ezek 23.

In his search for a deeper meaning, Clement finds help in Greek philosophy. This is signaled in the second sentence of the chapter, where he uses two words especially favored by Stoic philosophers, ἀπάθεια and κατορθώω, to describe the perfection of the ideal Christian. Platonic and Middle Platonist ideas also aid his interpretation, most especially the phrase ‘becoming like God as far as is possible’ from *Theaetetus* 176.¹⁷ But while these philosophical ideas are useful, Clement finds the most important key to a deeper understanding of 1 Corinthians 6 within the Bible itself, in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

3. PAUL AND THE NEW LAW OF THE GOSPEL

This is evident from the summary of Paul’s chapter with which Clement begins his detailed exegesis:

For not only does Paul define the gnostic as one who suffers injustice rather than commits it [see *Gorg.* 508 c–d], but he also teaches that the gnostic is to be unmindful of injury (ἀμνησικάκος), not even allowing him to pray against those who have done him wrong. For he knows that the Lord himself explicitly commanded us to *pray for* [our] enemies (Matt 5:44).¹⁸

This paragraph suggests that what has particularly engaged Clement’s attention in 1 Corinthians 6 is verses 7–8, which read:

To have any lawsuits with one another shows your defeat. Why not rather suffer injustice? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves commit injustice and defraud—and your own brothers at that.

Paul’s words remind Clement of Socrates’ statement in the *Gorgias* “that it is as much more evil as it is more shameful to do than to suffer wrong.”¹⁹ He argues that Paul goes beyond Socrates to demand an even higher level of virtue. In suffering wrong, the perfect Christian must of course not retaliate (VII 84, 6).²⁰ And, in addition, he must take two further steps. First, he must not even pray for revenge—a point Clement derives from a curious exegesis of the phrase “go to court before the holy ones” in 1Cor 6:1. Following

¹⁷ *Strom.* VII 84, 2; 85, 2; 86, 5. See discussion of this theme in part 4 below.

¹⁸ *Strom.* VII 84, 5.

¹⁹ *Gorg.* 508c–d. This allusion, not noticed by Stählin or Hort and Mayor, was first mentioned by Giovanni Pini in Clemente di Alessandria, *Gli Stromati. Note di vera filosofia* (Milan: Paoline, 1985), followed by Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII ad loc.*

²⁰ This is Clement’s understanding in VII 84, 6 of Paul’s forbidding “going to court before the unrighteous” in 1Cor 6:2.

unnamed earlier exegetes, he understands this as a prohibition of praying to holy ones in heaven (apparently angels) to carry out vengeance (VII 84, 7).²¹ Secondly, the gnostic must progress even further towards perfection by renouncing completely the *desire* for vengeance.

Clement discerns this meaning in Paul's words about lawsuits because he reads them in light of Matthew 5:43–48.²² In this text, part of the Sermon on the Mount and the last of six contrasts between the Old Testament law and that of the gospel, Jesus sets over against the command to "love your neighbor and hate your enemy"²³ the new law of loving one's enemies and even praying for them. Clement argues that the gnostic, who perfectly observes Jesus' teaching, will have an absolutely pure mind, with neither desire for revenge or memory of injury. Instead he will cultivate the positive quality Clement calls ἀμνησικαχία (VII 85, 7; 86, 1), "unmindfulness of injury."

That the gospel brings a new, more exacting moral demand is a central theme in Clement's explication of 1 Corinthians 6. He explains Paul's determination not to "be overpowered by anything" (verse 12) as a resolve not to "do or think or say anything contrary to the gospel" (VII 87, 2). He gives a similar interpretation to a phrase in verse 17: "the one who is joined to the Lord in the Spirit" (VII 88, 3).²⁴ This shows, Clement says, that the gnostic, who has been "formed by the teaching of the Lord in deed, word and in his very spirit" is particularly near to the Lord (VII 88, 3).²⁵ Explicating

²¹ For Clement the word ἅγιοι in verse 1 refers not to Christian adjudicators, but to holy ones in heaven. Prayer is a prominent theme in *Stromateis* VII; see especially the description of pure and holy gnostic prayer in VII 35, 1–49, 8. In this passage Clement anticipates a point he will make in chapter 14 when he cautions against a misuse of prayer: "But we must never use this kind of prayer [for avoidance of evils] for the injury of other men, except where the gnostic might adapt his request so as to contrive for those who were hardened their return to righteousness" (VII 39, 5).

²² A point mentioned by Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*, 260 n. 2: "Comme le signale G. Pini, Clément trouve sans doute en *1 Cor* 6,7 un echo du *Gorgias* 508 cd (cf. 509 c), pour souligner ensuite que le gnostique l'emporte sur le philosophe, en lisant la péricope paulinienne à la lumière de *Matth.* 5:44." The importance of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7) as inspiration for Clement's vision of Christian perfection is illustrated in other parts of his writings, most obviously in his chapter on the beatitudes (Matt 5:1–12), which serves as a sample exegesis in *Stromateis* IV 25–41. A possible reason for his choice of 1 Cor 6 for the model exegesis in *Stromateis* VII is that with its verbal echo of words of Plato in verse 7, it helps to translate Jesus' moral teaching into a form accessible to Greek philosophers.

²³ See Lev 19:18 for the first half of this command; the second half of the command is not found anywhere in the Old Testament.

²⁴ I follow Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*, 269 n. 5, in preserving the reading of the manuscript, ἐν πνεύματι, instead of Stählin's emendation to ἐν πνεύμα.

²⁵ Clement goes on to speak of the gnostic's special eschatological reward.

Paul's claim in verse 9 that "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God," Clement says:

A person who retaliates is guilty of injustice whether it is a matter of deed or word or even inner intention. It is this intention which the gospel, coming after the pedagogy of the law (Gal 3:24), proscribes.²⁶

The contrast between the morality of the Old Testament and that required by the gospel recalls other passages in the *Stromateis* where Clement uses the polarity of law and gospel to describe the difference between the simple believer and the more advanced gnostic. While the believer concentrates on eliminating sins by following the proscriptions of the Old Testament, the gnostic has advanced to the more demanding morality taught by Jesus.²⁷

4. PERFECTING THE DIVINE LIKENESS: FROM PLATO TO JESUS AND PAUL

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus' radical command to love ones' enemies is followed in Matt 5:45 by a theological justification: "For [God] makes his sun rise on the wicked and the good and sends rain to the just and the unjust." Clement reflects on Jesus' words with the help of Greek philosophy. He paraphrases Matt 5:45:

*For [God] makes his sun shine on the just and the unjust,*²⁸ and he sent the Lord himself to the just and the unjust. And the person who strives to become like God (ὁ τε ἐξομοιοῦσθαι βιαζόμενος θεῷ), who in complete unmindfulness of injury (διὰ τῆς πολλῆς ἀμνησικακίας) forgives *seventy times seven* (Matt 18:22) ... is kind to everyone (cf. 1Cor 13:4; Luke 6:35), even if someone continues throughout his whole life in the flesh to treat this gnostic unjustly.²⁹

Here and at four other points in our chapter (VII 84, 2; 86, 2.5, and 88, 5) Clement refers to the Platonic theme of 'likeness to God' (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ), presenting a specifically Christian version of what this means. This is a

²⁶ *Strom.* VII 86, 3.

²⁷ See, e.g., *Strom.* IV 130, 1–4; 113, 6–114, 1; 135, 1–3; VI 60, 2–3. In these passages Clement mentions two general ways in which the morality of the New Testament differs from that of the Old Testament: it is motivated by love, not fear, and it is not limited to "avoidance of evils" but requires active beneficence.

²⁸ Clement conflates two phrases from Matt 5:45: "for [God] makes his sun rise* [*Clement reads: 'shine'] on the wicked and the good" and "[God] sends rain to the just and the unjust."

²⁹ *Strom.* VII 85, 2.

prominent theme in the *Stromateis*.³⁰ One particularly interesting example is chapter 22 of the second book of the *Stromateis*, where Clement quotes explicitly the following sentences from *Theaetetus* 176b:

That is why we should try to flee with all speed from this world to the other, and that means becoming like God as far as we can (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δύναντον), and that again means becoming just and holy and wise as well.³¹

In an analysis of this chapter from book two Dietmar Wyrwa points out that Clement's reading of *Theaetetus* 176b has been influenced by Middle Platonists who understand this text in light of two other Platonic references to 'likeness to God'—*Laws* IV 715d–718b and *Timaeus* 89d–90d.³² Read in their original context, these three passages have quite different nuances, but Middle Platonists such as Eudorus of Alexandria interpret all three to refer to the same thing: the virtuous life as the ultimate goal, or *telos* of man. Wyrwa shows how Clement, working within this tradition, further reinterprets the Platonic motif of 'likeness to God' by relating it to the biblical emphasis on following the divine commandments and to a Christian vision of eschatological perfection.

Clement associates the Platonic references to 'likeness to God' with Genesis 1:26, which describes the creation of man in God's 'image' (εἰκών) and 'likeness' (ὁμοίωσις). In *Strom.* II 132, 6 he mentions the view of certain unnamed Christians that a person receives the 'image' at birth but the 'likeness' only when he reaches perfection. In our passage in *Stromateis* VII, chapter 14, he adopts a similar view, claiming that while all humans are created in the 'image' of God, it is only the gnostic who possesses the divine 'likeness' (VII 85, 2–5).³³ Here Clement specifies two qualities that constitute 'divine likeness'.³⁴ The first is beneficence. The gnostic, he says, imitates

³⁰ See, e.g., *Strom.* VII 13, 2–4, 16, 5; 64, 5; II 80, 5–81, 1; 97, 1–102, 6; 103, 1; 131, 2–134, 2; IV 137, 2–138, 3; 147, 1–153, 1; V 13, 2; 94, 5–96, 3; VI 72, 2.

³¹ *Strom.* II 133, 3.

³² Dietmar Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung in den Stromateis des Clemens von Alexandria* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983), 173–189; see also Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 106–117. Plato uses the noun ὁμοίωσις in *Theaet.* 176b, the adjective ὁμοιος [θεῷ] in *Laws* IV 716c–d and the verb ὁμοίω in *Tim.* 90d. Clement quotes from the first two passages in *Strom.* II 132, 1–133, 1 and from the last two in *Strom.* V 95, 4–96, 2.

³³ Compare *Strom.* V 94, 5–6, where he says that the 'image' of God is the divine Logos, but the 'image of the image' is the human mind, and that 'likeness' is achieved by fulfilling the divine commandments.

³⁴ In *Strom.* II 97, 1, following Philo, *De virt.* 168–169, Clement gives a longer list of qualities that contribute to the divine 'likeness': continence, patience, living righteously, ruling over

the beneficence of God, which is evident both in the natural order and in the sending of his Son into the world. The beneficent action (εὐποι(α)) of the gnostic is a repeated refrain in *Stromateis* VII.³⁵ It is presented as an advanced level of morality compared to that of the simple believer, whose task is “avoidance of evils” (ἀποχή τῶν κακῶν).³⁶ In his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6, Clement finds a reference to the benevolent action that is characteristic of the gnostic in the phrase *but you washed yourselves* from verse 11:

But you washed yourselves (1 Cor 6:11), not in the simple sense that applies to others; instead through knowledge you have thoroughly cleansed yourselves of the passions of the soul, so as to become assimilated as far as possible (εἰς τὸ ἐξομοιοῦσθαι ὅση δύναμις; cf. *Theaet.* 176b), to the goodness of God’s providence, by enduring patiently and being unmindful of injury (διὰ τῆς ἀνεξιδικίας διὰ τῆς ἀμνησικακίας). Thus you shine the goodness of your words and your deeds *upon the just and the unjust*, like the sun (Matt 5:45).³⁷

Here Jesus’ description of God’s benevolent action is adapted to praise the godlike goodness of the gnostic, whose words and deeds “shine” on just and unjust alike.

This passage also points to a second specific feature of the gnostic’s ‘likeness to God’: imitation of God’s ‘unmindfulness of injury.’ A central theme in our chapter, the noun ἀμνησικακία and its cognate adjective and verb, appear six times, beginning with Clement’s initial summary of 1 Corinthians 6 in *Strom.* VII 84, 5.³⁸ Henry Chadwick translated this word with ‘forgiveness,’ but this leaves out an important nuance of what Clement wants to say. To be ‘unmindful of injury’ is to have a superhuman ability to *forgive* offenses and, going further, not even to *remember* them. It means loving one’s enemies not only in one’s actions but also in the innermost recesses of the heart, and having a mind undisturbed by any memory of injury or

the passions, sharing one’s possessions, and doing good in both word and deed. On qualities that belong to the divine ‘likeness’ according to Clement, see Hubert Merki, *ΩΜΟΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΩΝ von der platonischen Angleichung an Gott zur Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa* (Fribourg en Suisse: Paulusverlag, 1952), 45–60.

³⁵ See, e.g., the following paragraphs in *Strom.* VII 13, 2; 21, 1–2; 48, 6; 71, 3; 72, 3; 78, 1; 80, 1; 81, 4. See also *Strom.* I 173, 5–174, 1; II 78–96; 97, 1–102, 6; VI 103, 1–104, 3; *Quis dives* 28, 4.

³⁶ See, e.g., *Strom.* VII 72, 3; 79, 1; cf. *Strom.* IV 130, 2; VI 103, 2.

³⁷ *Strom.* VII 86, 5.

³⁸ *Strom.* VII 85, 1, 5; 86, 6 (noun); 84, 5, 7 (adjective); 88, 4 (verb). There are several other occurrences of these words in Clement’s *oeuvre*; see *Paed.* I 14, 3; *Strom.* II 87, 2–88, 3; IV 137, 2 and the similar words in *Strom.* VII 69, 3 and *Quis dives* 40, 1.

offense. The adjective *μνησίκακος* appears only once in the Septuagint,³⁹ and Clement does not cite a biblical warrant for his emphasis on ‘unmindfulness of injury.’ But his usage may well reflect the many Old Testament passages that speak of God’s wiping away past transgressions by using the verb ‘to remember’ (*zakar*) and the negative. So the Psalmist pleads with God: “Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to thy steadfast love remember me, for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord” (Ps 25:7; cf. Ps 79:8). When God speaks through prophetic oracles he does not say “I will forget” but rather “I will remember no more”:

I, I am He who blots out your transgression for my own sake, and I will not remember yours sins.⁴⁰

Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... And they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will remember their sin no more.⁴¹

5. FREEDOM FROM THE PASSIONS: PAUL, JESUS, AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY

The last reference to ‘unmindfulness of injury’ in our chapter comes in Clement’s summary of his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6 in *Strom.* VII 88, 4:

You must be perfect as your Father is perfect (Matt 5:48), perfectly forgiving sins (cf. Matt 6:12.14) and being unmindful of injury (*ἀμνησικάκοι*) and having stability in freedom from the passions (*ἐν τῇ ἕξει τῆς ἀπαθείας*).⁴²

This passage, in which Clement quotes the last verse of Matthew 5, confirms the importance of the Sermon on the Mount for his understanding of Paul’s words on lawsuits and fornication. It also reflects his debt to Greek philosophy. The term *ἀπάθεια* mentioned at the beginning of the chapter (VII 84, 2) appears here again at the end. Clement introduces the theme of ‘freedom from the passions’ early in *Stromateis* VII: in VII 7, 2.5 the words *ἀπάθεια* and *ἀπαθής* describe the divine Logos, and in VII 13.3 they are used to portray the perfect gnostic, whose task is perfecting the divine likeness in himself and those he teaches (cf. VII 10, 1; 14, 3.5). The word *ἀπάθεια* brings

³⁹ Prov 12:28: “In the ways of righteousness is life, but the path of one who remembers injuries (*μνησίκακος*) leads to death.” The cognate verb is used in Prov 21:24.

⁴⁰ Isa 43:25.

⁴¹ Jer 31:31, 34. See Ezek 33:13–16 for similar usage.

⁴² *Strom.* VII 88, 4.

to mind teachings of the Old Stoa. Chrysippus, for example, counseled ‘freedom from passion,’ defining passion as an “excessive impulse,” i.e. one that is irrational (*SVF* III 479; cf. III 462), and a “false judgement” (*SVF* III 466). Some interpreters have understood Clement’s championing of ἀπάθεια as a clear indication that Stoic philosophy had a strong influence on his ethical teaching.⁴³ Others have pointed out that the background and meaning of ἀπάθεια in Clement’s writings is more complex. Bradley counsels that specific parallels between Clement and Stoic thinkers need to be assessed in the context of their whole philosophical systems:

The one trait that appears to be the common characteristic and the identical foundation for the moral life, the doctrine of *apatheia*, has, in fact, a very different philosophical significance.⁴⁴

Lilla argues that Clement’s use of this word is mediated by Middle Platonism and paralleled in the Neoplatonists Plotinus and Porphyry.⁴⁵ He sees a close precedent in Philo, who uses the words μετριοπάθεια and ἀπάθεια to distinguish two degrees of perfection, modeled respectively by the high priest Aaron and Moses (*Leg.* III 126–132).⁴⁶ In a discussion of ancient debates about μετριοπάθεια and ἀπάθεια, Dillon argues that Platonists such as Plutarch, Taurus, Albinus, Apuleius, and the “Platonic-inspired” Philo misunderstood what Stoics meant by ἀπάθεια:

Only so can Philo comfortably make a distinction between *metriopatheia* as being proper to the man of median virtue, who is still improving (the *prokoptōn*, symbolized by Aaron), and *apatheia*, which is proper to the achieved sage (symbolized by Moses, *Leg.* III 129–132) as if the two concepts could be accommodated on a sliding scale. Plainly Philo is here taking *apatheia* as being a truly yogic ideal and is quite missing the significance of the great debate.⁴⁷

Dillon points out that the most important difference between the Platonist ideal of μετριοπάθεια and the Stoic ideal of ἀπάθεια is that they presuppose

⁴³ See especially Max Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 421, and idem, *Klemens von Alexandria und sein hellenisches Christentum* (NAWG, phil.-hist. Kl.; Göttingen, 1943/3) 103–180, especially 166.

⁴⁴ Denis Bradley, “The Transformation of the Stoic Ethic in Clement of Alexandria,” *Augustinianum* 14 (1974) 41–66 (here 64).

⁴⁵ Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 84–105.

⁴⁶ See also *Leg.* II 100, 102, 131.

⁴⁷ John Dillon, “*Metriopatheia* and *Apatheia*: Some Reflections on a Controversy in Later Greek Ethics,” in John P. Anton (ed.), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1984), vol. II, 508–518 (here 515). See also Anthony A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 175–178.

quite different views of the soul.⁴⁸ While Stoics envision the soul as unitary with only the rational part, Platonists posit a bipartite or tripartite soul, which includes an irrational part.⁴⁹ On the Stoic view, the problem of 'passion' is urgent because it can pervert the whole soul; virtue is not a matter of either full or partial control of an irrational part but of the soul's whole orientation.⁵⁰

These competing ideals occasioned much debate among ancient philosophers. Plutarch, for example, argues against the Stoic view of ἀπάθεια in *De virtute morale*. George Karamanolis summarizes the main point at issue here which involves contrasting views of the soul:

For the Stoics, emotions (πάθη) are impulses to which the reasoning mind assents, and thus are essentially beliefs (*De virt. mor.* 447A). And since for them emotions are excessive impulses, the reason's assent to them amounts to reason being directed in the wrong way ... Plutarch sets out to show that emotions are essential for attaining virtue, a view which, as he claims, both Plato and Aristotle maintained ... Plutarch is concerned to defend the model of a partite soul which comprises an irrational element, the source of emotions.⁵¹

In *De virtute morali* 440 Plutarch defines virtue as a state in which the passions are under the control of reason. According to Karamanolis, some Platonists, however, held that Plato himself advocated ἀπάθεια.⁵² He argues that Plutarch himself does not totally reject this ideal but redefines it in terms of assimilation to God and two different levels of virtue (one human and one divine):

Apparently Plutarch, like Porphyry and later Platonists, maintained the existence of different levels of ethical life, and *apatheia* corresponds to the more exalted level, which involves a life of contemplation devoted to the theoretical understanding of reality.⁵³

⁴⁸ Dillon, "Metriopatheia and Apatheia," 511.

⁴⁹ George E. Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 85–126 (here 118), notes that variation between description of the soul as bipartite or tripartite goes back to Plato: "in the Republic, for instance, the tripartition clearly is the extension of a basic bipartition (e.g. *Rep.* 439d–e), while in later dialogues (*Timaeus* 41c–d, 69c–e; *Politics* 309c; *Laws* 653b–c, 904b–c) Plato speaks more in terms of a bipartite soul."

⁵⁰ Dillon, "Metriopatheia and Apatheia," 511.

⁵¹ Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle*, 116–117. He translates the word πάθος, which I render as 'passion,' as 'emotion.'

⁵² Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle*, 120, citing Anon., *In Nic. eth.* 127, 3–8; Clement, *Strom.* IV 147, 1; and Atticus, fr. 2 and 7 (des Places, CAG XX).

⁵³ Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle*, 123. As evidence he cites: Plutarch, *De virt. mor.* 444d; *De def. or.* 470e; cf. Plato, *Tim.* 90b–c, and Plutarch, *De sera* 550d–c.

Writing in the context of these debates, Clement also reinterprets the Stoic word. Since he follows the Platonic view that the soul is bipartite or tripartite,⁵⁴ ἀπάθεια necessarily has a different sense in his writings than it has for Chrysippus and other Stoics. Like Philo (and possibly Plutarch), Clement contrasts ἀπάθεια, as the highest level of virtue, with moderation of the passions (μετριοπάθεια), which is the goal of an earlier stage of discipline.⁵⁵

In addition, the word ἀπάθεια receives other nuances when Clement associates it with words from the Bible.⁵⁶ As we have seen, in our chapter and many other passages, he closely relates ἀπάθεια with achieving divine likeness (VII 84, 1–2).⁵⁷ He frequently reminds his readers that both God and the divine Logos are ἀπαθής.⁵⁸ In *Stromateis* VII, chapter 14, Clement interprets 1 Corinthians 6 as a call to achieve complete victory over passions that disturb the soul's stability. In *Strom.* VII 86, 5 (quoted earlier) he interprets Paul's words "you washed yourselves" in 1 Cor 6:11 as referring to the extirpation of the passions by means of γυνώσις, and he interprets the next phrase of the verse, "but you were made holy," in a similar way:

For holiness belongs to the one who has attained such a stable state (ἔξις) that he never, in any way, slips into any passion, but is as it were already freed from the flesh (ἀσάρκῳ), having reached a holiness⁵⁹ that transcends this world.⁶⁰

The word ἀσάρκῳ points to another way in which Clement's teaching differs from that of the Stoics. Maier argues that Clement's understanding of ἀπάθεια is more rigorous than that of the Stoics, in that he rejects the Stoic idea that there are 'rational passions' (εὐπάθειαι)⁶¹ and holds that not only 'excessive passions' but even desire itself must be eliminated.⁶² For Clement

⁵⁴ For example in *Strom.* V 53, 1 he alludes to Plato's image (from *Phaedr.* 246b) of the rational part of the soul as charioteer, who must control the irrational parts of the soul, symbolized by 'horses.' See also *Protr.* 121, 1; *Paed.* III 53, 2; *Strom.* VI 134, 1 and 136, 4.

⁵⁵ *Strom.* II 39, 4; VI 71, 2; 74, 1–2; 105, 1 cf. IV 138, 1; *Ecl.* 45, 1.

⁵⁶ For one aspect of this Christian modification see Andrew Louth, "Apathetic Love in Clement of Alexandria," *SP* 18 (1989) 413–418.

⁵⁷ Other passages that associate ἀπάθεια and 'likeness to God' are: *Strom.* II 103, 1; IV 137, 2–138, 3; 147, 1–153, 1; V 94, 5; VI 72, 2; VII 13, 2. In addition Clement speaks of ἀπάθεια in *Strom.* IV 55, 4 and *Quis dives* 21, 1; and uses the word ἀπαθής in *Paed.* III 35, 1; *Strom.* II 40, 2; IV 119, 2; VI 73, 2; *Ecl.* 52, 2.

⁵⁸ For God, see *Paed.* I 4, 1; *Strom.* II 40, 2; IV 151, 1; VI 73, 6; 137, 4; on the divine Logos as ἀπαθής, see *Paed.* I 4, 1; *Strom.* V 94, 5; VI 72, 1–2; VII 7, 5.

⁵⁹ Following the text of Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII ad loc.* Stählin, following Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, brackets the word ἁγίῳ.

⁶⁰ *Strom.* VII 86, 7.

⁶¹ See *SVF* III 431.

⁶² Harry Maier, "Clement of Alexandria and the Care of the Self," *JAR* 62/3 (1994) 719–745

the battle against the passions is more intense because it is interpreted in the context of biblical ideas about sin, flesh, the crucifixion of the self, judgment, and salvation. Maier argues:

While the conceptions concerning sin and the flesh certainly overlap with Middle Platonic and Stoic ones, as for example when he refers to the ideals of the regulation of the passions and the ordering of the self to conform with nature, for Clement the flesh signifies a much more troubling reality.⁶³

Although he firmly rejects the view that the body is evil,⁶⁴ Clement follows Paul in depicting the struggle against the 'flesh' as a matter of life and death. Pauline verses that speak of the need to die to the flesh, to sin, and to the world (e.g. Gal 2:19–20; 6:14; Rom 6:2–3) or describe the battle between flesh and Spirit (e.g. Gal 5:17, cf. Rom 7:20–25 on the battle between "flesh" and the "law of God in the mind") make frequent appearances in his work. These biblical words give discussions of the philosophical theme of controlling the passions a new urgency, as the following text illustrates:

Such a one [the gnostic] has an accurate understanding of *unless you hate your father and mother, yes, and even your life itself* and *unless you bear the sign* (Luke 14:26.27). For he hates the inclination toward the passions of the flesh with their potent magic of pleasure, and he looks down on all that is likely to produce and nourish the flesh; but he resists the corporeal soul (τῆς σωματικῆς ψυχῆς), by putting a bit in the mouth of the irrational spirit (τῷ ἀλόγῳ πνεύματι) when it breaks loose, because *What the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit* (Gal 5:17).⁶⁵

(here 727–730). Among the texts Maier cites are: *Strom* VI 71, 2–72, 1 (for Clement's rejection of the 'good emotions') and *Strom.* III 57, 1–2; 58, 1–2; 59, 1–4 (on total rejection of desire). Maier, 427, contrasts Clement's position to the Stoic view: "For the Stoics *apatheia* describes an ideal ethical state which arises as the result of the transformation and control of natural impulses. The *apatheia* of the Stoic sage does not denote insensibility or lack of affection: the Stoics employ the term *eupatheia* to describe the state of the sage who has successfully mastered these impulses so that they conform with rational nature."

⁶³ Maier, "Clement of Alexandria," 731.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., *Strom.* IV 163, 1–2.

⁶⁵ *Strom.* VII 79, 5–6. In the citation of Luke 14:27 Clement substitutes the word 'sign' for 'cross.' See also Clement's use of Gal 5:17 in *Strom.* VI 136, 2, his allusion to Gal 2:19 ("I have been crucified with Christ") in *Strom.* IV 137, 2; the use of Gal 6:14 in *Strom.* II 103, 1–104, 2 and IV 12, 2–6; and the citation of Rom 6:2–3; 7:20–25 and several other Pauline texts in *Strom.* III 74–78.

6. PERFECT MORAL ACTION AND INNER INTENTION

At the beginning of our chapter, in *Strom.* VII 84, 1, Clement again evokes Stoic thinkers when he uses the verb *κατορθόω* to describe the perfect action of the gnostic. In Stoic philosophy the word *κατόρθωμα* designates the actions of the ideal sage, which proceed from firm knowledge (*ὁρθὸς λόγος*) and a stable inner state of virtue.⁶⁶ An action is deemed perfect not by its result but by the moral mindset from which it springs, by the “attitude, intention, and disposition” of the agent.

Therefore Stoics argued that a ‘perfect’ act or morally right action (*katorthoma*) depended not on the content of the act or on what was done ... but only on ‘virtue’ (*arete*) which related to how or why it was done (‘rightly,’ ‘morally,’ ‘wisely,’ *dikaios, iuste, phronimos*), and this in turn seemed to depend on the agent, his attitude, intention, and disposition.⁶⁷

Clement’s indebtedness to such ideas is made quite clear in a passage from *Stromateis* VI:

So also one could say that every action of the gnostic is a *κατόρθωμα*, but every action of the simple believer is an intermediate action (*μέση*), since it is not yet done in accordance with reason or accomplished through knowledge ... For it is not simply acting well, but performing actions with a certain aim and doing what is fitting in accordance with reason that the Scriptures commend.⁶⁸

Throughout his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6, Clement stresses the importance of proper intent. Paul forbids retaliation and fornication “in deed, word and thought”—a triad that is mentioned three times in the chapter.⁶⁹ It is not

⁶⁶ Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, vol. I, 128–129 (on Zeno); vol. II, 73, referring to *SVF* III 500–543. See especially *SVF* III 501 and 494, which reports Chrysippus’ definition of *κατόρθωμα*: On Stoic teaching about virtue, see Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 199–205, and John M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), 97–111. Rist, 81, translates *κατόρθωμα* as ‘moral act.’

⁶⁷ Ian G. Kidd, “Moral Actions and Rules in Stoic Ethics,” in John M. Rist (ed.), *The Stoics* (Berkeley: University of California, 1978), 248. See also Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, vol. I, 128: “Ein Katorthoma ist nur die Handlung, die aus fester weltanschaulicher Erkenntnis rein im Hinblick auf die sittliche Bestimmung des Menschen vollbracht wird.” Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 204, points out: “But if an appropriate act is performed by someone who is not a sage it lacks the fundamental characteristic of fitting into a pattern of actions all of which are completely harmonious with each other.” See *SVF* III 510.

⁶⁸ *Strom.* VI 111, 3. Note that in the section on Chrysippus’ ethics entitled “Recte facta a mediis officiis qua re differant,” in *SVF* III 500–543, von Arnim prints this passage from Clement as fr. 515; *Strom.* VII 59, 2–5 appears as fr. 511.

⁶⁹ *Strom.* VII 86, 1; 88, 1.3. This triad of terms also appears earlier in *Strom.* VII, see, e.g., 54, 1.

enough to refrain from *actively* seeking retaliation, nor does it suffice to forego *prayer* for retaliation. The gnostic must also eliminate any *desire* to retaliate. Even following the gospel command to forgive is not enough; in addition the gnostic must make his heart so totally pure that he does not even *remember* injury. By attaining the positive state Clement calls ἀμνησικαλία, ‘unmindfulness of injury,’ the gnostic perfectly fulfills the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and becomes like God, the universal benevolent Father who has sent his Son to teach all humanity and raise them up to God.

7. THE CHAPTER IN CONTEXT

Having arrived at the end of Clement’s chapter, it is time to return to my first question: how does this chapter function in its context? Clement introduces *Stromateis* VII as an apology to ‘the Greeks’ that has two primary aims. The first is to persuade ‘the Greeks’ that their persecution of Christians is madness and the second is to bring about their conversion to the faith:

It is now time for us to demonstrate to the Greeks that the only truly devout person is the gnostic, so that the philosophers, when they learn what sort of person the true Christian is, will condemn their own folly for carelessly persecuting the name of Christ and foolishly charging those who know the true God with atheism.⁷⁰

Next he states his missionary strategy: in the seventh book he will argue from reason, adding testimonies from Scripture only later on “after they have believed” (VII 1, 2–3). Clement’s eagerness to convert ‘the Greeks’ is mentioned at several points in *Stromateis* VII,⁷¹ and it is evident in our chapter as well. Commenting on the word ‘brothers’ in 1 Cor 6:8, Clement says:

Why not rather suffer injustice? Paul says. Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves commit injustice and defraud ... you defraud those against whom you pray of the goodness and kindness of God—and your brothers at that (1 Cor 6:7–8) ... This means not only those who are brothers in the faith, but

⁷⁰ *Strom.* VII 1, 1.

⁷¹ For example he writes in VII 3, 5: “For, as the best treatment of plants is that whereby the fruits grow and are gathered in by the science and art of husbandry ... so the best ingathering which the devoutness of the gnostic can accomplish by means of his art is the appropriation of the fruit of all who have come to believe through him, as one after another becomes possessed of knowledge and is thus brought into the way of salvation.” Translation from Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*. See also VII 74, 3; 75, 5.

also the strangers among us (Deut 28:43). For we do not yet know whether even one who is now hostile may later believe.⁷²

The other aim Clement announced in the prologue of *Stromateis* VII, to persuade ‘the Greeks’ to stop persecuting Christians, finds many echoes in the rest of the book, as Clement praises those Christians who are truly called by God to suffer for the faith⁷³ and insists that such people have committed no crimes.⁷⁴ In our chapter Clement alludes to persecution in a comment on 1 Cor 6:7–8:

But [Paul] means that the just person should ask the judges to forgive those who have wronged him, and quite rightly, since those who seek injustice stand to gain only what is external and concerned with the body—even if this should extend to [the injured person’s] death (καὶν μέχρι θανάτου προβαίνῃ).⁷⁵ None of these external things is an appropriate concern for the gnostic.⁷⁶

More generally, Clement’s exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6 serves Clement’s appeal to ‘the Greeks’ by reinforcing the central argument of the first two parts of *Stromateis* VII: that the true Christian is the only really ‘devout’ person as well as a model of perfect virtue (VII 1, 1; 54, 1–4; 81, 3; 84, 1).⁷⁷

CONCLUSION

The old debate about whether Clement was more a Greek philosopher or a biblical theologian⁷⁸ has given way in recent years to a recognition that one cannot easily separate the two major sources of his thought, or portray one pole as a mere ‘husk’ that surrounds the essence of his teaching. Scholars

⁷² *Strom.* VII 85, 5–86, 1; see also 85, 1: “It is therefore a good thing when [the enemies] come to a better understanding when they are brought to the faith through repentance.”

⁷³ See, e.g., the following sections from *Stromateis* VII: 51, 7; 59, 2; 63, 2–3; 65, 1–3; 66, 4; 67, 1–2; 72, 4; 74, 4–5; 76, 2; 82, 5–6.

⁷⁴ *Strom.* VII 54, 2.

⁷⁵ Alternate translation of the last phrase: “even if this should last his whole life.” Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*, 263, favors this second construal: “on ne s’enrichit que de biens extérieur et de ce qui relève du corps, cet accroissement durerait-il jusqu’à la mort.” Clement also alludes to persecution and hostility to Christians in VII 85, 1–2 and 86, 1.

⁷⁶ *Strom.* VII 85, 3.

⁷⁷ Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*, 9–10 divides *Stromateis* VII into three parts, the first two of which, 1, 1–54, 4 and 55, 1–88, 7, argue these two points, respectively. He characterizes chapter 14 as a “recapitulation of the remarks on perfection.”

⁷⁸ For example Walther Völker, *Der Wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952) argues that Greek ideas are merely the ‘husk’ for Clement’s Christian ideas. For the opposite argument see, e.g., Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 63–150.

such as Wyrwa, Lilla, Le Boulluec, Osborn, and Ashwin-Siejkowski have explored specific cases of Clement's original synthesis of biblical and Greek ideas.⁷⁹ The model exegesis in *Stromateis* VII, chapter 14, is another example of Clement's creativity. He chooses what seems at first an unlikely biblical text to illustrate the superiority of the Christian ideal to the various patterns for the perfect life offered by Greek philosophy.

Paul's chapter, viewed in light of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, also serves as a fitting illustration of Clement's fundamental convictions about Scripture: 1) that it contains the highest teaching available to human beings, which both includes and goes beyond the best Greek philosophy has to offer; 2) that it speaks with one voice; and 3) that its teaching is to be read on more than one level. Commandments such as Moses' 'do not kill' or Paul's forbidding Christians to engage in lawsuits and fornication have one sense for beginners in the faith, teaching them to refrain from sin and control their passions, but quite another for those who are progressing towards perfection. Read on the higher level, 1 Corinthians 6 becomes a fitting illustration of Clement's fundamental claim that Scripture makes an extremely high moral demand, and that the Christian who fulfills this demand—the gnostic—is a model of human perfection. Whatever Clement's reasons for choosing this text as his one model exegesis in *Stromateis* VII may have been, it proves to be a fruitful jumping off point for his argument that the Christian Scriptures encompass the best of what Greek philosophy has to offer—and even more. In Clement's eyes this text shows clearly that the person who conforms his life to Scripture's teachings is in fact the best possible human being, a model of piety towards God and benevolence to all people.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Wyrwa, *Platonaneignung*; Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, Le Boulluec, *Stromate VII*; idem, Clément d'Alexandrie, *Stromate V*, vol. II: Commentaire (SC 279; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1981); Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005); Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria. A Project of Christian Perfection* (London/New York: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2008).

⁸⁰ I am grateful to members of the Colloquium Clementinum meeting in Olomouc for stimulating discussions of *Stromateis* VII.

THE IDEA OF MARTYRDOM IN *STROMATEIS* VII:
A PROPOSAL FOR A RECONSTRUCTION OF
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S PHILOSOPHY

Davide Dainese

INTRODUCTION

"The experiences of an individual appear to us arranged in a series of events; in this series the single events which we remember appear to be ordered according to the criterion of 'earlier' and 'later' [...]. There exists, therefore, for the individual, an I-time, or subjective time. This itself is not measurable." With these words, Albert Einstein began his lectures at Princeton University in 1921. Although he claimed that time does not exist, Einstein confirmed that everything has a subjective temporal dimension. Everything, perhaps, except the *Stromateis*, according to most scholarship.

Scholars have been frustrated by the nature of the *Stromateis*; in fact, it is difficult to reconstruct a temporal line within such a miscellaneous work for two reasons: first, since its contents are both speculative and practical, and second, because of its contradictory character. But what if we could find a connection between his theological concepts and his biography? And what if we could recognize, within his whole literary production, different stages of the development of his theology? In fact, we can, in Clement's concept of martyrdom.

Clement's ideas about martyrdom are contradictory because the Alexandrian is both enthusiastic about martyrdom or confession and critical of it.¹ In *Strom.* IV 71–76 Clement exhorts to martyrdom,² while in *Strom.* VII

¹ The terms martyrdom and confession are often used as equivalent; see Marco Rizzi, "Il martirio come pragmatica sociale in Clemente Alessandrino," *Adamantius* 9 (2003) 60–66, here 60f. This essay applies the thesis of Glen W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995) to Clement's historical context. Cf. *infra*, note 45. It may be also useful to recall the discussion on Alexandrian persecutions. See my Davide Dainese, *Passibilità divina. La dottrina dell'anima in Clemente Alessandrino* (Rome: Città Nuova), par. III.5 (forthcoming).

² Cf. *Strom.* IV 71, 4; 72, 1; 74, 1; 75, 1–3; 76, 2: "And confession by the lip is not universal, but partial. But that which He [i.e. the Lord] specifies now is universal, that which is by deeds

66–67 he strongly discourages it.³ A similar critique of reckless behaviour of some martyrs can be found in *Strom.* IV 76–77, immediately after Clement's having encouraged martyrdom. In other words, right after criticizing Heraclion's notion of martyrdom, Clement agrees with Heraclion without giving an explanation. If Clement's critical attitude towards martyrdom is examined, his account in *Strom.* IV seems to present a moderate opinion on martyrdom similar to the account of Origen in his *Exhortation to Martyr-*

and actions corresponding to faith in Him. This confession is followed by the one that is partial, the one before the authorities, if necessary, and reason dictate. [...] [T]hose [i.e. those who denied, because they confessed Him only with their voice] thought that they confessed Him with the voice, yet they denied Him, not confessing Him in their conduct [...]. So that confession is by all means necessary, for it is in our power. But to make a defence of our faith is not universally necessary, for that does not depend on us. [...] Alone, therefore, the Lord, for the folly of the men who plotted against Him and the purification of the men who disbelieved Him, 'drank the cup'; in imitation of whom the apostles, that they might be in reality gnostics and perfect, suffered for the churches which they founded. So then the gnostics who tread in the footsteps of the apostles also ought to be sinless, and, out of love for the Lord, also love their brother; so that, if occasion call, enduring without stumbling the afflictions for the church, 'they may drink the cup.' [...]. He who disobeys is rash and foolhardy." After exhorting to martyrdom, Clement warns about reckless behaviour towards sacrifice. As such, this account (both positive and negative) seems to be an expression of a moderate position about the issue.

³ *Strom.* VII 66, 3; 66, 4; 67, 2–3: "No one, then, who is irrationally brave, is a gnostic: since one might call children brave [...] and [so] wild beasts [...], and jugglers as well [...]. But he who is truly brave [...] is distinguished from others that are called martyrs, inasmuch as some furnish occasions for themselves, and rush into the heart of dangers, I do not know how (for it is right to use mild language); while they [i.e. the gnostics, truly brave], in accordance with the right reason, protect themselves [...], because they have offered themselves to the exercise of true rational fortitude. [...] Therefore in the gnostic, along with knowledge, the perfection of fortitude is developed from the discipline of life, he having always studied to acquire mastery over the passions." Furthermore, the description of the gnostic soul in *Strom.* VII 11 comes from the process of spiritualization of the ideal of martyrdom; cf. Marco Rizzi, "Il fondamento epistemologico della mistica in Clemente Alessandrino," in M. Rizzi and L.F. Pizzolato (eds.), *Origene maestro di vita spirituale. Origen: Master of Spiritual Life. Milano, 13–15 Settembre 1999* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2000), 91–122, here 109–115; on this theme, see also Annewies van den Hoek, "Clement of Alexandria on Martyrdom," *SP* 26 (1991) 324–341. In fact, Clement says, the martyr is called "to be proved in the exercise of true rational fortitude." In him, indeed, "along with knowledge, the perfection of fortitude is developed from the discipline of life, he having always studied to acquire mastery over the passions." Furthermore Clement distinguishes this kind of 'spiritualized' martyr from 'rash martyrs,' i. e., those who rush into the heart of dangers. The ideal of a spiritual martyr contrasts with the exhortation in *Strom.* IV in two ways: it is more conceptual than practical and it is aligned with criticism of the 'rash' martyrs. In other words, when Clement speaks in a conceptual way about martyrdom, he criticizes some martyrs because of their rashness. On the contrary, if he deals with this topic in a practical way, he encourages martyrdom. So Clement's statements about martyrdom are, on the whole, contradictory.

dom. In reality, when we consider Clement's critique of Heracleon, his position turns out to be both favourable and unfavourable towards martyrdom, while in *Strom.* VII he is decidedly critical and the only positive interpretation of the martyr he gives is a symbolic figure of a man dominating his passions. That is why Annewies van den Hoek rightly points out in Clement the beginning of the process of spiritualization of the martyr.⁴ On the other hand, in the last few years scholars have realized the potency of Clement's words on martyrs. Ulrich Schneider and Marco Rizzi suggest that Clement's encouragement to martyrdom could have a social impact.⁵ More specifically, Rizzi said that not all martyrs necessarily died, but most were punished. When they were released, they obtained power in leadership over other Christians.⁶ As for the contradictory character of Clement's idea about martyrs, I believe that it could be explained by the compound nature of the *Stromateis*. According to André Méhat, the contradictions in the *Stromateis* are due to the fact that they are a collection of different material from various moments of Clement's life elaborated to interact with many different interlocutors.⁷ The two different views of martyrdom come from two different sections of the work, and thus I think they represent a change in thought.

PRELIMINARY NOTIONS AND OUTLINE

This paper interprets Clement's concepts of martyrdom within the framework of the whole *Stromateis*, and it argues that Clement changes his opinion on martyrdom while developing his doctrine of the soul.

⁴ See van den Hoek, "Martyrdom," note 3.

⁵ See Rizzi, "Martirio," 64: "... in Clemente [...] l'allargamento del significato del martirio non va solo nella direzione di una sua 'spiritualizzazione', bensì anche dell'allargamento delle sue valenze e delle sue implicazioni" and "Nell'atto [...] della testimonianza in tribunale è possibile stabilire una scala gerarchica, non solo quanto alle intenzioni [...], bensì anche in relazione all'efficacia e all'impatto pubblico di essa." See Ulrich Schneider, *Theologie als christliche Philosophie* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1999), 227 f., on the concept of the 'gnostic' as an allegory of the Christian martyr: "Der Gnostiker beschränkt sich [...] nicht darauf, für seine eigene Seele Trost und Stabilität [...] zu schöpfen [...], sondern gestaltet selbst aktiv die Welt."

⁶ See Rizzi, "Martirio cristiano e protagonismo civico: rileggendo Martyrdom & Rome di G.W. Bowersock," *Alle radici della comune casa europea*, IV. *Modelli eroici dall'antichità alla cultura europea* (Rome: "l'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2003), 317–340, here 321 f.

⁷ See André Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates' de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966), here 292 f.: "La forme et le contenu des *Stromates* s'expliquent donc en partie par le public auquel Clément le destine, et qu'il imagine d'après celui de ses lecteurs."

The first problem we have to face is the fact that martyrdom is a historical reality, while psychology is a concept. In this case it is good to remember that the historical fact of Roman persecutions made Christian writers see martyrdom as an ideal. And later the concept of martyrdom would become primarily spiritual (the spiritual 'martyrdom' of monks).⁸ So, since martyrdom is both conceptual and factual, we can connect it to other topics, for instance the doctrine of the soul.

Why the soul? Because psychology is the key theme for any author from late antiquity;⁹ it is the 'litmus test' of their thought. So by paying attention to the soul we can determine any author's position on other issues.

I suspect that the link between the ideal of martyrdom and psychology is the concept of the spirit. For this reason, if I want to understand both the position and the role that martyrdom plays within the *Stromateis*, I am going to study (Part 1):

- A. The relationship between Clement's *references* to martyrdom and Clement's psychology within the whole work;
- B. The role of the *ideal* of martyrdom for Clement's psychology within the framework of the whole. And here I have to consider:
 - a. The relationship between the concept of the soul and the concept of the spirit where martyrdom is irrelevant;
 - b. The relationship between the soul and the spirit where martyrdom plays a crucial role.

In this way, I will show that 'pneumatology' and 'martyrdom' are equivalent themes for Clement. In addition, as a second purpose, I will try to show that Clement, eventually, replaces 'martyrdom' by 'spirit' as a result of a development within his psychology (Part 2).¹⁰

⁸ See especially van den Hoek, "Martyrdom," 341.

⁹ See Heinrich Dörrie and Matthias Baltes, *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus: Von der "Seele" als der Ursache aller sinnvollen Abläufe. Bausteine 169–181: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar* (= *Der Platonismus in der Antike* VI.2) (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann holzboog, 2002), 418.

¹⁰ We should make it clear that the term 'psychology,' as it occurs in this paper, has nothing to do with the modern science of the mind and behaviour. It refers rather to André-Jean Festugière's intuitions, more recently confirmed by Heinrich Dörrie, Matthias Baltes, and their school. I mean the idea of a doctrine concerning the protology (the origin and fall of the souls, as well as embodiment and its corollaries, for instance the relationship between the soul and the body in the embryo; see André-Jean Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, III: *Les doctrines de l'âme. Suivi de Jamblique, Traité de l'âme* (Paris: Gabalda, 1953), 7 f., 27–96, 265–302), the destiny of embodied souls (i.e. the choice of life, see *Révélation*, III, 97–118), and eschatology (see *Révélation*, III, 119–174). Many other issues should be focused

1. PSYCHOLOGY, SPIRIT, AND MARTYRDOM

Martyrdom and Psychology within the Stromateis

First we need to place Clement's statements about martyrdom within the context of the whole work. One can look at the *Stromateis* as a whole work from many different perspectives. I have chosen Clement's philosophical system because I think that all his statements could be linked to his philosophy as a whole. Since scholars believe that the core of late antique philosophy is the doctrine of the soul, Clement's philosophical system also centres on it. Let us clarify what I am referring to. For this article it is sufficient to recall the intuitions of André-Jean Festugière. In his research dedicated to the doctrine of the soul in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the French Dominican noted in 1953 that all late antique philosophical systems could be summed up in three theories: protology, the choice of life, and the destiny of the soul after death (eschatology). Protology is a discussion about the pre-existence of the soul and it concerns the problem of the unitary character of the rational soul (the Platonic notion of the soul as an idea) and its relationship to many individual souls. The second theory, the so-called *choice of life*, sums up ethics and it expresses the conditions of the rational soul in the body, that is, the relationship of the rational soul to the sensible dimension. As a consequence of the way in which a soul behaves in the corporal dimension, it will have a certain fate after death. The third doctrine, i.e. eschatology, is related to the problem of the return of the many individual souls into the unitary nature of the rational soul. Together with these three issues, Platonist philosophers used to discuss other themes, first of all embryology which tries to explain the relationship between the soul and the body during conception. For our purposes, it is important to stress that for a Platonist philosopher eschatology is the direct consequence of the choice of life.

Now, the themes of martyrdom and confession are treated throughout *Stromateis* II–IV. Dealing with these subjects, Clement discusses them at a level corresponding to either a sort of 'consequences of the choice of life' (the second phase of classical psychology, according to Festugière¹¹) or the

on (it is enough to have a look at the index of Dörrie and Baltes, *Platonismus* VI.2), but this does not imply that Festugière did not raise them (for example by means of the translation with critical notes of Iamblichus' *Περὶ ψυχῆς*, see in particular *Révélation*, III, 177–215). In fact his tripartite scheme also works after the two volumes on the Platonic doctrine of the soul edited by Dörrie and Baltes.

¹¹ See Festugière, *Révélation*, III, 113–118.

separation of the soul from the body after death. In other words, in both cases, martyrdom/confession falls into an eschatological context. In fact, when Clement speaks about martyrdom or confession while he is discussing the destiny of the soul after death, he is also elaborating on eschatology (because eschatology is the theory of the fate of the soul after it is separated from the body). When Clement mentions martyrdom or confession as consequences of choices of life, he remains in an eschatological framework, because eschatology is also the consequence of the choice of life. Let us try to compare two explanatory texts:

Strom. IV 74, 1: So that confession is by all means necessary. For it is in our power. But to make a defence of our faith is not universally necessary. For that does not depend on us.¹²

Strom. II 34, 2–35, 5: But the law given to us enjoins us to shun what are, in reality, bad things—adultery, uncleanness, pederasty, ignorance, wickedness, disease of the soul, death (not that which severs the soul from the body, but that which severs the soul from truth). [...] I think that by ‘death’ the Scripture means ignorance. *And he that is near the Lord is full of stripes* (Jdt 8: 27). Plainly, he that draws near to knowledge has the benefit of perils, fears, troubles, and afflictions, by reason of his desire for the truth. [...] *let us, as far as in us lies, practise the fear of God, and strive to keep his commandments* (Isa 5:21 in *Barn.* 4, 11).¹³

In the first text Clement is referring to the Aristotelian-Stoic notion of that which is ‘in our power.’ The expression ἐφ’ ἡμῖν explains the ‘confessing disposition’ (διάθεσις ὁμολογουμένη) mentioned in *Strom.* IV 73, 2, and it corresponds to Chrysippus’ *Fr. mor.* 197 (von Arnim). Here Clement is appropriating a classic notion of Stoic ethic (responsibility) to support his idea of martyrdom as a way to propagate Christian faith.¹⁴ I think that the expression ἐφ’ ὅσον ἐστὶν ἐφ’ ἡμῖν in the second text should also be understood in the same framework of the Aristotelian-Stoic concept of responsibility.

¹² “Ὡστε τὸ ὁμολογεῖν ἐκ παντὸς δεῖ, ἐφ’ ἡμῖν γάρ, ἀπολογεῖσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἐκ παντός, οὐ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο ἐφ’ ἡμῖν.

¹³ Ἡμῖν δὲ ὁ δοθείς νόμος τὰ τῷ ὄντι κακὰ ἀποφεύγειν προστάττει, μοιχείαν, ἀσέλγειαν, παιδεραστείαν, ἀγνοίαν, ἀδικίαν, νόσον ψυχῆς, θάνατον, οὐ τὸν διαλύοντα ψυχὴν ἀπὸ σώματος, ἀλλὰ τὸν διαλύοντα ψυχὴν ἀπὸ ἀληθείας ... θάνατον, οἶμαι, τὴν ἀγνοίαν λέγει· καὶ ὁ ἐγγὺς κυρίου πλήρης μαρτύρων· ὁ συνεγγίζων δηλονότι τῇ γνώσει κινδύνων, φόβων, ἀνίων, θλίψεων διὰ τὸν πόθον τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπολαύει ... ἐφ’ ὅσον ἐστὶν ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, μελετῶμεν τὸν φόβον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ φυλάσσειν ἀγωνιζώμεθα τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ.

¹⁴ On this theme see Rizzi, “Martirio.”

At first it seems that this expression limits the capacity of man. In fact, Clement supports this idea when he talks about man's claim to be like God.¹⁵ However, Clement is not dealing with ὁμοίωσις. Moreover, the figure of the gnostic in this text is described by the metaphor of 'suffering' and 'death' (cited in Jdt 8:27). Clement interprets suffering and death in an allegorical way, as symbols of ignorance. Suffering and death as characteristics of the gnostic (*Strom.* II 35) are aspects which draw the gnostic near to the martyr of *Strom.* IV 74. So the martyr in the first text and the gnostic in the second text are very similar. Consequently, the expression ἐφ' ὅσον ἐστὶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν (*Strom.* II 35, 5) is very close to the expression ἐφ' ἡμῖν (*Strom.* IV 74, 1). So, even if the expression from the second text ἐφ' ὅσον ἐστὶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν (quoted from the so-called *Epistle of Barnabas*) apparently has nothing to do with Stoic ethic, when compared to the Stoic ἐφ' ἡμῖν of the first text it assumes the same Stoic connotation. So we can say that *Stromateis* II–IV use Stoic ideas to portray the figure of the martyr. Indeed, Schneider also discovered that Clement had described the Christian martyr with a Stoic notion, namely the concept of *apatheia*. The only difference between the Stoic figure of the wise man and Clement's Christian martyr is that the martyr is active in the world.¹⁶ The same concept is elaborated in *Strom.* II–IV: the martyr is described with a Stoic notion in *Strom.* II 35, as well as in *Strom.* IV 74, and in *Strom.* IV 74 he also has an active role.¹⁷

Let us continue our discussion about the relationship between eschatology and martyrdom. In *Stromateis* II–IV Clement describes martyrdom as something directly related to man's responsibility and therefore he makes martyrdom a consequence of the choice of life. It means that martyrdom is conceived in an eschatological way as a figure of an eschatological condition. After the discussion of martyrdom in the passages of *Strom.* IV mentioned above, the theme of martyrdom no longer occurs. In fact, the theme of martyrdom is not addressed until *Strom.* VII 66–67,¹⁸ a text where Clement is strongly critical of the reckless behaviour of some martyrs. Given these points, we have the following scheme:

1. In *Strom.* II–IV the ideal of martyrdom is presented as a symbol for eschatology;

¹⁵ See also Alcinous, *Did.* 28, 1.

¹⁶ See Schneider, *Theologie*, 227 f.

¹⁷ That is, as Rizzi ("Martirio," 63–65) shows, he encourages other people to become Christians.

¹⁸ With the only exception of *Strom.* VI 167, 5; too short to be considered relevant.

2. In *Strom.* V–VII the ideal of martyrdom recedes in importance and, as a consequence, Clement separates martyrdom and eschatology;¹⁹
3. In *Strom.* VII Clement speaks about the ideal of martyrdom, trying to *spiritualize* it by releasing it from eschatological imagery.

To summarize, the theme of the soul subdivides the *Stromateis*. We use this structure to explain other related topics in the work and to highlight the notion that spiritual (*pneumatic*) perfection and the ideal of martyrdom are synonymous.

Spirit and Martyrdom

a. Soul and Spirit

We can see the main differences between the two blocks of the *Stromateis* mentioned above (i.e. *Strom.* II–V, as opposed to *Strom.* VI–VII) if we pay attention to Clement's psychology. As a consequence, we immediately recognize two thematic blocks within the whole work. The first block (*Strom.* II–V) contains four promises of a future treatise on psychology. The second block (*Strom.* VI and VII) does not contain such a promise anymore, and actually it includes a developed psychology, as I will try to show later. In this connection we should highlight three elements:

1. When Clement promises an investigation into the theme of the soul, his only audience are his Gnostic opponents. Let us have a look at the four texts to which I am referring:

Strom. II 112, 1–113, 2: The adherents of Basilides are in the habit of calling the passions appendages, saying that these are, in essence, certain spirits attached to the rational soul, through some original perturbation and confusion, and that, again, other bastard and heterogeneous natures of spirits grow onto them, like that of the wolf, the ape, the lion, or the goat, whose properties, showing themselves around the soul, they say, assimilate the lusts of the soul to the likeness of the animals. For they imitate the actions of those whose properties they bear. And not only are they associated with the impulses and perceptions of the irrational animals, but they affect the motions and the beauties of plants, on account of their also bearing the properties of plants attached to them. They also have the properties of a particular state, such as the hardness of steel. But we shall subsequently argue against this dogma, when we consider the soul.

¹⁹ For the main characteristics of the new eschatology, see Davide Dainese, "Il *Protreptico* ai Greci di Clemente Alessandrino: Una proposta di contestualizzazione," *Adamantius* 16 (2010) 256–285, here 275.

Strom. III 13, 1–3: The philosophers whom we have mentioned, from whom the Marcionites blasphemously derived their doctrine that birth is evil [...], do not hold that it is evil by nature, but only for the soul which has perceived the truth. For they think the soul is divine and has come down here to this world as a place of punishment. In their view souls which have become embodied need to be purified. But this doctrine is not that of Marcion, but of those who believe that the souls are enclosed in bodies and change from this prison and undergo transmigration. There will be an opportunity to reply to these when we come to speak about the soul.

Strom. IV 85, 3: But with reference to these dogmas, whether the soul is changed to another body, also of the devil, mention will be made at the proper time.

Strom. V 88, 2–4: But we assert that the Holy Spirit inspires him who has believed. The Platonists hold that the mind is an effluence of divine dispensation in the soul, and they place the soul in the body. [...] But it is not as a portion of God that the Spirit is in each of us. But how this dispensation takes place, and what the Holy Spirit is, shall be shown by us in the [books] on prophecy, and in [those] on the soul.

As we can see, in the first text Clement refers explicitly to the school of Basilides, and the same is true of the third passage, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the quoted text.²⁰ Then, in the second passage, Clement interacts with the Marcionites, and finally in the last one he implicitly refers to the Valentinians.²¹

2. The main conceptual difference between the two aforementioned blocks concerns the notion of the Holy Spirit. This comes out clearly in *Strom.* VI 134–136.²² First of all, here the concept of the Holy Spirit is not as

²⁰ But the whole section of *Strom.* IV 81–88 (= chapter 12) refers to and quotes Basilidean doctrines.

²¹ Although in this passage Clement mentions certain “Platonists,” when he uses the term ἀπόρροια he refers, first of all, to Valentinian doctrines (*Exc.* 2). I have tried to show this in Dainese, “*Protrettico*,” 279–282, esp. 280, note 107. This text is problematic: Clement seems to be referring to the Valentinians when he says that *pneuma* is not in us as a part of God (*Strom.* V 88, 3), but his reference to the Platonists in *Strom.* V 88, 2 is also correct. He may be willing to indicate that the Valentinian doctrine of the spirit is in fact a Platonist one.

²² See *Strom.* VI 134, 2; 135, 1–4; 136, 4: “And there is a ten in man himself: the five senses, and the power of speech, and that of reproduction; and the eighth is the spiritual principle communicated at his creation; and the ninth the ruling faculty of the soul; and tenth, there is the distinctive characteristic of the Holy Spirit, which comes to him through faith. [...] And the soul is introduced, and previous to it the ruling faculty, by which we reason, not produced in procreation [...], faculties by which all the activity of man is carried out. For in order, straight away on man’s entering existence, his life begins with sensations. We accordingly assert that rational and ruling power is the cause of the constitution of the living creature;

problematic as in *Strom.* V 88. In fact, in *Strom.* V 88, 4 Clement promises to explain in the future what the Holy Spirit is (“what the Holy Spirit is shall be shown by us in the [books] on prophecy, and in [those] on the soul”). In *Strom.* VI 134–136, the Alexandrian seems to have a clearer idea. Indeed, he discusses the Holy Spirit, highlighting one of the main characteristics of the spirit operating in man. We can notice this in *Strom.* VI 134, 2 where Clement mentions a “distinctive characteristic (χαρακτηριστικὸν ἰδίωμα) of the Holy Spirit, which comes to him (i.e. to man) through faith.” The spirit as *χαρακτηριστικὸν ἰδίωμα* is a concept resulting from a speculation on the expression *χαρακτηριστικὸν ἰδίωμα* of the righteous man’s soul. Clement believes that the gnostic can anticipate the eschatological spiritual perfection in this world. To express this idea he uses the comparison between the role played by the spirit and “the dye prepared with the mordant” which, “remaining in the wool, produces in it a certain quality and diversity from other wool.” The metaphor of the mordant was typical of the rhetoric of that time. For our purpose it is sufficient to remember that Pseudo-Aristotle bequeathed the most complete formulation of this image in *De coloribus*.²³ It is also useful to recall that Musonius Ruphus and Quintilianus refer to this metaphor, giving it an ethical meaning.²⁴ The fact that this motif was common in late antiquity is important because it means that Clement needed a commonly accepted truth to describe the Holy Spirit. In other words, behind Clement’s speculation on the Holy Spirit in *Strom.* VI 134–136 there is a long reflection, still lacking in *Strom.* V 88, which is why in this last mentioned pericope Clement promises a future discussion about the Holy Spirit. Another fact supports this impression: Clement elaborates the notion of πνεῦμα by using the technical terms of *potency* (δύναμις) and *act* (ἐνέργεια) together through-

also that this, the irrational part, is animated, and is a part of it. Now the vital force, in which is comprehended the power of nutrition and growth, and generally of motion, is assigned to the carnal spirit, which has great susceptibility of motion, and passes in all directions through the senses and the rest of the body, and through the body is the primary subject of sensations. But the power of choice, in which investigation, and study, and knowledge, reside, belongs to the ruling faculty. But all the faculties are placed in relation to one—the ruling faculty: it is through that man lives, and lives in a certain way. [...] the two tables are also said to mean the commandments that were given to the twofold spirits—those communicated before the law to that which was created, and to the ruling faculty; [...] apprehension results from both combined.”

²³ Cf. *De col.* 794a 29f.

²⁴ Cf. Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* I 1, 5: *Ut sapor quo nova inbuas durat, nec lanarum colores quibus simplex ille candor mutuatus est elui possunt*; Musonius, *Fr. min.* 51 (Lutz): “Ἄν τι πράξης καλὸν μετὰ πόνου, ὁ μὲν πόνος οἴχεται, τὸ δὲ καλὸν μένει· ἂν τι ποιήσης αἰσχροὺς μετὰ ἡδονῆς, τὸ μὲν ἡδὺ οἴχεται, τὸ δὲ αἰσχροὺς μένει.

out *Strom.* VI 134–136.²⁵ The fact that Clement is using technical words from the late antique philosophical repertoire is also important. The Clement we are facing in *Strom.* VI 134–136 is different from that of *Strom.* V 88, 3 because in the first text he only uses commonly known metaphors and technical philosophical concepts. In other words, he is no longer the Clement looking for answers, but an author who displays a literary culture using philosophical and technical language to express a clear opinion on a subject which was previously problematic.

3. The text of *Strom.* VI 134–136 considers all aspects of the soul whose elaboration was promised in *Strom.* II–V, except eschatology. Clement, according to the promise made in *Strom.* V 88 (but also in *Strom.* II 112–113), drafts a theory of participation in the Holy Spirit, to avoid the Valentinian school's idea of 'participation in the Spirit.' More precisely, the Valentinians use the concept of ἀπόρροια in a sense which leaves too little room for human freedom.²⁶ As a result, Clement's solution follows in the footsteps of Platonist psychology, and he eventually arrives at the idea of individuation. This concept expresses that everyone lives a unique history, which each of us considers as something particular and different from the history of everyone else. The result is the so-called ἰδίωμα χαρακτηριστικόν of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in *Strom.* VI 134, 2.

This text is particularly interesting, because it solves the problems of Basilidean protology²⁷ on the anthropological level. Here Clement shows a clear anthropological interest since he provides two possible models of man's structure. In both cases man is composed of ten parts. In the first model (VI 134, 2) they are the following: the five senses, language, reproductive capacity, the "spiritual element, infused at the moment of creation," the ἡγεμονικόν of the soul and the ἰδίωμα χαρακτηριστικόν of the Holy Spirit.

²⁵ See Dainese, "Protreptico," 280f.

²⁶ I have tried to show this in Dainese, "Protreptico," 279–282. I am aware of the relevance of the term ἀπόρροια (*effluvium* or emanation) for Origen and for Neoplatonist metaphysics. The main difference between the Origenian-Neoplatonist usage of the concept of emanation and this particular meaning in Clement's *Stromateis* is that for Origen and Plotinus ἀπόρροια is used mainly to express the relationship between two principles (God the Father and the Son for Origen and the two first *hypostaseis* in Plotinus), whereas for Clement ἀπόρροια refers to that between man and God. Clement's rejection of the term ἀπόρροια as an expression of human participation in God does not imply that he does not use this concept in the same context as Origen and Plotinus. More precisely, ἀπόρροια in this sense does appear in a fragment which Photius reads as a pericope from the so-called *Hypotyposeis* (fr. 23, line 16).

²⁷ I mean the mythological idea of the protological fall. See Dörrie and Baltes, *Platonismus* VI.2, 163–217.

In the second model (VI 134, 3), the ten parts of man are the five senses plus their organs. The necessity to give two different proposals of man's composition is consequent to the consideration of the soul and its ἡγεμονικόν as parts of the original configuration of man. In fact, just after having explained the second model, Clement states: "And the soul is introduced, and in addition to it the ruling faculty, by which we reason, not produced in procreation; so that without it there is made up the number ten, of the faculties by which all the activity of man is carried out" (VI 135,1). In other words, behind the two possible configurations of man, there is speculation concerning one of the classic themes of traditional psychology: the entrance of the soul into the body, which is the subject of embryology. In short, Clement approaches the theme of man's composition from a classic and scholastic perspective. The two alternatives he provides probably represent the way in which any late antique philosopher would have handled the subject. He starts from the very core of anthropology: the doctrine of the soul, and, more precisely, from the theme of the embryo's animation. Here Clement shows that he has elaborated his own answer to classical anthropological problems, but he proposes an alternative idea to the myth of the fall to explain the relationship between the soul and the body. He prefers to speak about bodily passions not as a punishment affecting men on the ontological level, but in connection with the way of receiving the Holy Spirit through faith (VI 134, 2). Through the freedom located in the ἡγεμονικόν of the soul, "man," Clement says, "lives and lives in a certain way" (VI 135, 4). In other words, man is free to choose or to reject passions. In this way Clement explains the relationship between the soul and bodily passions, avoiding the awkward structure of Gnostic protology, as he promised in *Strom.* II 112–113. Clement believes that by paying attention to embryology one could avoid the protological fall and the soul's embodiment. In other words, he gets rid of the myth and picks up the issue from the scientific perspective. In so doing, Clement fulfils, above all, the task of the fourth promise (*Strom.* V 88), since he employs the Holy Spirit's *ιδίωμα χαρακτηριστικόν*. Second, he fulfils the first promise (*Strom.* II 112–113) and also part of the second one (*Strom.* III 13), i.e. the two promises concerning protology. But in order to fulfil this goal, he must first speak about eschatology.

The three points of difference between *Strom.* II–V and VI–VII indicated above show us how important the doctrines of his 'heterodox' Gnostics are for Clement's psychology: they force him to elaborate his theory of the soul in terms of pneumatology. The problems posed by the Gnostics cover the whole range of classical psychology, from protology to eschatology.

Nevertheless, Clement's solution (i.e. his pneumatology) does not seem to include eschatology, unless it does so in *Stromateis* VII, as I am going to show. At this moment it is sufficient to point out the link between the development of Clement's pneumatology and his solution of the problem created by Gnostic protology.

b. *Soul, Spirit, and Martyrdom*

As we have already seen, the Holy Spirit plays an important role in Clement's reaction to the Gnostic myth of the souls' protological fall. Actually, this happens in a part of the work where Clement leaves the theme of martyrdom aside (i.e. *Strom.* VI). So let us suppose that the development of Clement's pneumatology goes hand in hand with the abandonment of the ideal of martyrdom: it would mean that the notion of the 'spirit' is also crucial for a new eschatology,²⁸ a doctrine probably discussed in either *Stromateis* VI or VII.

My explanation will proceed in three steps, and my first point is derived from a general overview of Clement's account of martyrdom. Clement sometimes mentions a completely perfect condition, already achievable in this life within the flesh. He says that this condition is characteristic of the martyr in *Strom.* IV (130, 5; 155, 4; 169, 1), and of the gnostic, because of his spiritual nature, in *Strom.* VI–VII (VI 77, 1; 103, 5–6; VII 56,2–6; 74, 9; 76, 7; 86, 7; 101, 4). Hence, this overview shows how martyrdom and spiritual perfection compete over eschatology (in this case a 'realized eschatology'). These texts, indeed, also draw a clear map: martyrdom is used to define the realized eschatology in *Strom.* IV, while spiritual perfection does it throughout *Strom.* VI–VII. So much for the general framework; much more can be added.

The second step is the comparison between two eschatological symbols: *Strom.* IV 75, 1–2 (this passage was already quoted as a document of Clement's positive attitude to martyrdom) and *Strom.* VII 68, 5. The first text portrays the martyr as someone who is, within the church, an example to follow, like Jesus and his apostles. It is sufficient for us to have a look at the sequence: "The Lord"—Clement remembers—"drank the cup [...], in imitation of whom the apostles" etc. "*so, then, also the gnostics [...]* may drink

²⁸ It seems obvious that the concept of 'spirit' is crucial for Christian eschatology. But we must not forget that the notion of πνεῦμα was completely marginal in late antique philosophy. In the framework of the doctrine of the soul the concept of 'spirit' was used to express the envelopment protecting the rational soul from the matter in the body. Cf. Marco Zambon, "Il significato filosofico della dottrina neoplatonica dell' OXHMA dell' anima," in R. Chiaradonna (ed.), *Studi sull'anima in Plotino* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2005), 305–335.

the cup." On the contrary, in order to express the same idea, in *Strom.* VII 68 Clement uses the coincidence of the spiritualized soul and the spiritualized church. In fact, the gnostic soul is nothing but the presence in this world of the eschatological church, the bride of Christ. The gnostic soul is called the 'church' precisely because it is the model for souls in progress. In other words, a soul can really be perfect and gnostic as far as and as soon as it perfects every soul which imitates it. And this happens only in the eschatological perspective, at the end of time, when the gnostic soul may become the 'spiritual church,' the bride of Christ. Thus, in short, we can suppose that *Strom.* VII 68 depicts an eschatological scenario similar to the one portrayed in *Strom.* IV by means of the ideal of martyrdom. With this conclusion in mind we may adduce another piece of evidence which shows the analogy between spiritual perfection and martyrdom.

Our third step relates to the interchangeability of martyrs and spiritual men from a 'technical' perspective. The differences between them are found only in the descriptions of the spiritual man in *Stromateis* VII, and, specifically, in *Strom.* VII 68, where we are facing texts that are very close, thematically speaking, to *Strom.* VI 134–136, i.e. to a pericope in which, as we have already shown, the theme of the spirit is developed. In contrast, the descriptions of martyrs in *Strom.* II–IV do not require any pneumatological notions involving technical concepts, like that of *act* or *potency*, or speculations on embryology. As we mentioned above, following the indications of Festugière,²⁹ eschatology is the third part of classical psychology, as a consequence of the so-called 'choice of life.' It means that the link between the soul and matter will be tight more or less, according to the choice made. As a consequence of the choice made, the soul will be submitted to the process of liberation from the material coatings the soul has accumulated during its life. Let us remember that Clement speaks about the martyr as a symbol exactly in these terms, when he says that he who is "near to the Lord" is "full of stripes": "He that draws near to knowledge has the benefit of perils, fears, troubles, and afflictions, by reason of his desire for the truth."³⁰ Of course, Clement does not mention the martyr explicitly, but it is undeniable that to describe the gnostic he uses images of persecution and violence against those who confessed their faith. Now, we have already seen that in *Strom.* VI 134–136 Clement was interested in showing the anthropological basis for people's reception of the law. *Strom.* II 34 is closely associated to this

²⁹ See Festugière, *Révélation*, III, 120–174.

³⁰ *Strom.* II 34–35, quotation of Isa 5:21 in *Barn.* 4, 11.

text, because both of them are about the reception of the law. Through the words of *Barnabas* Clement speaks about the Aristotelian and Stoic principle of man's responsibility. For instance, both the death of the soul and the progress to perfection depend 'on us' (ἐφ' ἡμῖν). It is interesting to note that Clement describes progress by the metaphor of suffering, which recalls the martyr's suffering. In contrast, the text of *Strom.* VII 68, 3–5 recalls the eschatological context in a completely different way:

The gnostic, consequently, in virtue of being a lover of the one true God, is the really perfect man and friend of God, and is placed in the rank of son. For these are names of nobility and knowledge, and perfection in the contemplation of God; which crowning step of advancement the gnostic soul receives, when it has become quite pure, reckoned worthy to behold everlastingly God Almighty, 'face,' it is said, 'to face' (1 Cor 13:12). For having become wholly spiritual, and having in the spiritual church gone to what is of a kindred nature, it abides in the rest of God.³¹

Here we have the adjective συγγενής, 'of a kindred nature' (already used by Clement to describe eschatology in *Strom.* IV 132, 1). Second, the concept of the highest level of progress, marked by the 'epoptic vision,' occurs as well as (and above all) the theme of the *eschatological rest*. This passage also briefly depicts an eschatological framework. Hence, *Strom.* II 34–35 and *Strom.* VII 68 signify the same condition. But in the first case the central element is the martyr, while in the second one the key is the spiritualisation of the soul and the correlation of the soul with the 'spiritual church.' This achievement is particularly important, because *Strom.* II 34–35 parallels *Strom.* VI 134, except for the concept of the spirit. As a result, we could associate *Strom.* VII 68 with *Strom.* VI 134 to get the idea of a coherent pneumatology that takes heed both of protology and eschatology.

To sum up, with these three arguments we have shown that spiritual perfection and eschatology are, for Clement, interchangeable. This is an important achievement, because, after the pioneering approaches of Paul Ziegert³² and Gerrit Verkuy, ³³ no one studying Clement's eschatology could

³¹ 'Ο ἄρα γνωστικός, τοῦ ἐνὸς ὄντως θεοῦ ἀγαπητικὸς ὑπάρχων, τέλειος ὄντως ἀνὴρ καὶ φίλος τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐν υἱοῦ καταλεγεῖς τάξει. ταυτὶ γὰρ ὀνόματα εὐγενείας καὶ γνώσεως καὶ τελειότητος κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐποπτεῖαν, ἣν κορυφασιότατην προκοπὴν ἡ γνωστικὴ ψυχὴ λαμβάνει, καθαρὰ τέλεον γενομένη, πρόσωπον, φησί, πρὸς πρόσωπον ὁρᾶν αἰδίως καταξιουμένη τὸν παντοκράτορα θεόν. πνευματικὴ γὰρ ὅλη γενομένη πρὸς τὸ συγγενὲς χωρήσασα ἐν πνευματικῇ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ μένει εἰς τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν τοῦ θεοῦ.

³² See Paul Ziegert, *Zwei Abhandlungen über T. Flavius Clemens Alexandrinus* (Heidelberg: Hörning, 1894).

³³ See Gerrit Verkuy, *Die Psychologie des Clemens von Alexandrien im Verhältnis zu seiner Ethik* (Leipzig: Sturm & Koppe, 1906).

see its relationship to the soul and the spirit.³⁴ Nevertheless, this is not enough to prove that the idea of spiritual (*pneumatic*) perfection replaces eschatology as a result of the process of maturation. First we have to find a link between the notion of the spirit and the path of maturation within Clement's thought.

2. PSYCHOLOGY AS A RESULT OF CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The text of *Stromateis* VI, 134–136 marks a new stage of development within Clement's doctrine of the soul. This is important, because psychology (*pneumatology*) links together this passage of *Strom.* VI and sections of *Strom.* VII referring to martyrdom. If this is the case, the psychology of *Strom.* VII could also result from a development in Clement's thought. Consequently, both negative statements about martyrdom and the replacement of the ideal of martyrdom with that of the 'spiritual man' come from the same development, i.e. from Clement's changing opinion.

Let us recall that the anthropological pattern of *Strom.* VI 134–136 replaces the concept of ἀπόρροια, according to the Alexandrian's promise in *Strom.* V 88. The Valentinians in fact used this notion to found their anthropology, opposing the free-will-centred perspective. And it is Clement himself who testifies to that in the *Excerpts from Theodotus* 2. Therefore, this text enables us to suppose a previous well-structured Valentinian psychology. So, if Clement, by substituting the concept of ἀπόρροια, moves against the Valentinian system, it means that he is trying to solve problems proposed by Valentinian psychology.

Let us discuss a second piece of evidence, using the embryology of *Stromateis* VI to support our suspicion of a process of maturation in Clement's thought. *Stromateis* VI, in fact, makes the most complete use of the theme of the soul, and here a strong embryological interest guides Clement's anthropological account, as was stated above. What is, in fact, the goal of Clement's digression in *Strom.* VI 134–136 regarding man's composition? Clement's discourse concludes by stating the presence of two essential components of man, "two spirits," as he puts it, "one that is infused at the moment of creation and one that functions as a guide" (136, 4). These two elements are sufficient to reach Clement's goal, which is declared immediately afterwards

³⁴ See Dainese, "Clemente d'Alessandria e la filosofia: Prospettive aperte e nuove proposte. Rassegna degli studi," *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 4 (2012), in press.

(136, 5): “comprehension (κατάληψις) derives from both of them.” Therefore, through this section of the *Stromateis* Clement is interested in founding human ‘comprehension’ on the anthropological basis. Within this framework, Clement’s reflection on embryology becomes central if we consider the role played by the spirit infused at the moment of creation.

We will start by recalling all the Clementine texts that mention embryology: *Ecl.* 50;³⁵ *Strom.* VIII 13, 3–7;³⁶ *Paed.* I 48, 1.³⁷ What could be said about all these texts? It is certain that they do not all have the same value. Let us think about *Ecl.* 50, for example: it recalls the words of an ‘ancient.’ And again, we can notice how much *Strom.* VIII differs from *Paed.* I and *Strom.* VI. The first one looks like a mere rhetorical exercise, while the last two texts belong to an argumentative discourse. Then we see that only three of them use the concept of δύναμις/ἐνέργεια, just as *Strom.* VI 134–136 does. This fact helps us to suppose at least two steps in the development of this topic. In fact, the texts in question, expressing embryology by means of these notions, are the most technical ones, because philosophical and medical schools used to deal with embryology by means of the opposition δύναμις/ἐνέργεια.³⁸ We

³⁵ “An ancient said that the embryo is a living thing; for that the soul entering into the womb after it has been prepared for conception by cleansing, and introduced by one of the angels who preside over generation, and who knows the time for conception, moves the woman to intercourse; and that, on the seed being deposited, the spirit, which is in the seed, is, so to speak, appropriated, and is thus assumed into conjunction in the process of formation. He cited as a proof to all, how, when the angels give glad tidings to the barren, they introduce souls before conception. And in the Gospel ‘the babe leapt’ (Luke 1:43) as a living thing. And the barren are barren for this reason, that the soul, which unites for the deposit of the seed, is not introduced so as to secure conception and generation.”

³⁶ “But the question was whether the embryo is already an animal or still a plant. And then the name animal was reduced to definition, for the sake of perspicuity. But having discovered that it is distinguished from what is not an animal by sensation and motion from appetency; we again separated this from its adjuncts, asserting that it was one thing for that to be such potentially, which is not yet possessed of the power of sensation and motion, but will some time be so, and another thing already to be so actually; and in such a case, it is one thing to exert its powers, another to be able to exert them, but to be at rest or asleep. And this is the question.”

³⁷ “Further, this flesh and the blood in it are by a mutual sympathy moistened and increased by the milk. And the process of formation of the seed in conception ensues when it has mingled with the pure residue of the menses, which remains. For the force that is in the seed coagulating the substances of the blood, as the rennet curdles milk, effects the essential part of the formative process. For a suitable blending conduces to fruitfulness; but extremes are adverse, and tend to sterility.”

³⁸ See Dörrie and Baltes, *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus: Von der “Seele” als der Ursache aller sinnvollen Abläufe*. Bausteine 151–168: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar (= *Der Platonismus in der Antike* VI.1) (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann holzboog, 2002), 321–342, and also 343–373.

even have a precious indication of Clement's way of working. Let us look at the following passages in the *Eclogae Propheticae*:

Ecl. 28, 1–2: There are those calling themselves Gnostics who are envious of those in their own house more than strangers [...] The athlete, who knows the Olympic stadium, strips for training, contends, and becomes victorious, tripping up his antagonists and those who contend against his scientific method, and fighting out the contest.³⁹

Ecl. 32, 2: We must, then, search the Scriptures accurately, [...] and from the names hunt out the thoughts which the Holy Spirit, propounding respecting things, teaches by imprinting his mind, so to speak, on the expressions, that the names used with various meanings, being made the subject of accurate investigation, may be explained, and that which is hidden under many integuments may, being handled and learned, come to light and gleam forth.⁴⁰

Ecl. 36, 1–2: It is, therefore, equally requisite for him who wishes to have a pupil who is docile, and has blended faith with aspiration, to exercise himself and constantly to study by himself, investigating the truth of his speculations; and when he thinks himself right, to descend to questions regarding things contiguous. For the young birds make attempts to fly in the nest, exercising their wings.⁴¹

We are going to make two preliminary points. First, all of these texts insist on the need for a preliminary analytical phase before starting to learn: *Ecl.* 28 (opposing the 'Gnostics') talks about γνωρίζειν τὸ στάδιον Ὀλυμπιακόν before fighting, an expression which alludes to the necessity of a propedeutic phase before acceding to proper knowledge; *Ecl.* 32 speaks about a long preliminary phase, in the course of which the researcher runs through the Holy Scriptures (thus searching for sources which support his own doctrines) and performs their ἐξέτασις; and *Ecl.* 36 brings up the so-called εὖ ἔχειν phase (thinking oneself right), understood as a result of γυμνάζειν and μελετάν.

³⁹ Εἰσὶ δ' οἱ λέγοντες εἶναι γνωστικοὶ τοῖς οἰκείοις φθονοῦσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ἐκτός ... ὁ δὲ ἀθλητής, γνωρίσας τὸ στάδιον τὸ Ὀλυμπιακόν, ἐπαποδύεται τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ καὶ ἀγωνίζεται καὶ νικηφόρος γίνεται, τοὺς ἀντιπάλους καὶ κατατρέχοντας τῆς γνωστικῆς ὁδοῦ παρακρουσάμενος καὶ καταγωνισάμενος.

⁴⁰ Δεῖ τοίνυν τὰς γραφὰς ἀκριβῶς διερευνωμένους, ... ἀπὸ τῶν ὀνομάτων θηρᾶσθαι τὰς δόξας, ἃς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἔχον, εἰς τὰς λέξεις ὡς εἰπεῖν τὴν αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν ἐκτυπωσάμενον, διδάσκει, ἵνα ἡμῖν ἀκριβῶς ἐξεταζόμενα διαπτύσσηται μὲν τὰ ὀνόματα πολυσήμως εἰρημένα, τὸ δ' ἔγκεκρυμμένον ἐν πολλοῖς τοῖς σκέπουσι ψηλαφώμενον καὶ καταμανθάνόμενον ἐκφαίνηται καὶ ἀναλάμψῃ.

⁴¹ Δεῖ τοίνυν ἐπ' ἴσης τῷ βουλομένῳ τὸ πειθόμενον ἔχειν τὸν μαθητὴν καὶ τῷ πόθῳ τὴν πίστιν ἐγκαταμίξαντα γυμνάζειν καὶ μελετάν, ἐκάστοτε πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τὴν τῶν θεωρημάτων ἀλήθειαν ἐξετάζοντα· ἐπειδὴν δὲ εὖ ἔχειν αὐτῷ δοκῇ, τότε δὴ καὶ εἰς τὰς τῶν πέλας ζητήσεις καθιέναι· ἐπεὶ καὶ οἱ νεοττοὶ προαποπειρώνται τοῦ πετάσαι ἐπὶ τῆς καλῆς γυμνάσαντες τὰ πτερὰ.

It is remarkable that after the preliminary phase, culminating in the state of εὖ ἔχειν, *Ecl.* 36 adds another step. Certainly this phase, not the last one yet, is called εἰς τὰς τῶν πέλας ζητήσεις καθιέναι (“to descend to questions regarding things contiguous”). Clement says that the final acquisition of persuasive skills comes only after these ζητήσεις. In other words, before writing, Clement’s researcher should:

- a. Study issues and themes of discussion, in order to avoid the Gnostics’ mistake of not “getting the outlook of the stadium” (28, 1);⁴²
- b. Look for supporting resources, reading texts and opinions to get informed. For example, in the quoted text he mentions the Holy Scriptures (32, 2), but such a liberal writer as Clement did not disdain philosophical theories or the so-called ‘tradition of the presbyters.’ This is the ‘source-hunting phase’ corresponding to the analysis before εἰς τὰς τῶν πέλας ζητήσεις καθιέναι (36, 1).
- c. Practice (36, 2).

I have a suspicion that each of the aforementioned texts concerned with embryology represents a phase of this procedure. Among them *Stromateis* VIII and *Eclogae* 50 are the least complete: *Strom.* VIII is a mere argumentational scheme, and *Ecl.* 50 is a report of someone’s opinion (of a *presbyteros*). In addition, *Strom.* VIII seems to correspond to the phase of εἰς τὰς τῶν πέλας ζητήσεις καθιέναι, while *Ecl.* 50 is clearly a result of what we have called the ‘source-hunting phase.’ In a word, we can recognize, at least, the tracks of a process of elaboration, in which *Stromateis* VI and *Pedagogue* I represent the most developed stage. To summarize, the difference between the four texts expressing Clement’s embryology seems to be explained by a process involving:

- a. Gathering and studying sources;
- b. Rhetorical training, to become familiar with the way intellectuals in his time used to set up similar discussions.

In conclusion, we can formulate a hypothesis about how Clement elaborated his position on embryology in *Strom.* VI 134–136 and *Paed.* I 48. Clement wants to deal with the part of man’s composition allowing

⁴² Clement, in fact, uses the metaphor of the athlete who, before fighting, studies the stadium, to describe those distinguishing themselves from the Gnostics. Similarly, in *Ecl.* 28, 1, Clement seems to invite himself and the reader to get to know deeply all the facets of the themes to be discussed before venturing into them.

'comprehension.' He then realizes that he cannot keep silent about the way the soul enters into the body and animates it. Therefore, he probably searches for opinions from others who had speculated on these themes before him. Texts like *Ecl.* 50 testify that Clement had looked for answers in the so-called 'tradition of the presbyters.' Then he perhaps elaborated these doctrines while eliminating their mythological language which was so distant from the scientific vocabulary of philosophical theories. In fact, late antique philosophy reflected broadly on these issues. It formulated comprehensive and satisfying answers to the question of how the rational soul enters into the body. Clement was aware of that, as he shows in *Stromateis* VIII, where he examines various views of philosophical schools on this matter. In passages where Clement's position about the soul in the body seems to be clearer nothing is left of the mythological contents of the doctrines of the 'presbyters' (like the figure of the angel), but only philosophical (*act* and *potency* in *Strom.* VI 134–136) or medical (*Paed.* I 48) notions remain. Therefore, it seems that Clement acted according to what he stated in *Ecl.* 36. Before formulating his own position, Clement probably tried to become familiar with the way intellectuals in his time used to set up similar discussions. Clement could not expose his own theory about embryology as he does in *Strom.* VI 134–136 and in *Paed.* I 48, (a) without knowing precisely the problem to be solved, (b) without universally acknowledged sources to support his own convictions, and (c) without considering contemporary philosophers' opinions. We are not going to discuss whether Clement elaborated the psychology of the first book of the *Pedagogue* before or after writing about the soul in *Stromateis* VI; however, we can be fairly sure that the greater complexity of Clementine psychology in *Strom.* VI 134–136 is the result of a careful process of gathering sources and then analysing them. And this is the crucial difference between *Strom.* VI 134–136 and Clement's psychology in *Strom.* I–V.

Let us conclude. One could suppose that Clement elaborated the section of *Strom.* VI 134–136 before writing the one with the four promises (*Strom.* II–V). Therefore, one could believe that the long text of *Strom.* VI 134–136 is located after *Strom.* II–V for the sake of orderly discussion. But we suggested that Clement is solving problems posed by the Valentinian system, and then we showed the effort required to find a satisfying solution. His effort in responding to his opponents makes us think about the time that passed from when he faced the Gnostics to when he found a solution to their problems: the time necessary to develop his position regarding the soul's entrance into the body.

The variety within the *Stromateis* is not only a matter of Clement's changing audience, as Méhat supposed,⁴³ but it also reflects his personal maturation. Unless he changed many interlocutors in a few days to draft such a major work, we have to consider the time factor. It is true that the variety could be a stylistic choice as well,⁴⁴ nevertheless, it does not exclude the possibility that Clement might have written eight books over a long period of time.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that in *Stromateis* VI–VII Clement fulfils the promises he made in books II–V by means of the concept of the spirit. We have also suggested that the concept of spiritual perfection, elaborated in *Strom.* VII, might have replaced the concept of martyrdom developed in *Strom.* II–V: both concepts symbolize an eschatological condition. To put it briefly, the concept of the spirit is the main characteristic of the psychology in *Strom.* VI–VII, which implies the psychology developed in *Strom.* II–V.

In addition, we have proposed that the psychology in *Strom.* VI–VII not only fulfils the tasks of *Strom.* II–V, but also highlights a conceptual analysis. This fact distinguishes the developed psychology of *Strom.* VI–VII from the first answers given to the Gnostics when Clement promises a future treatise on the soul.

We may draw the following conclusion. If the psychology of *Strom.* VI–VII implies the psychology of *Strom.* II–V, then it is developed *afterwards*. In other words, it implies and comes after a dispute with the Gnostics. And if the second part of the work is more elaborated than the first one, it is due to the process of problem solving in the last part of the work. So, after facing his Gnostic opponents, Clement developed a complete psychology. As a result, the replacement of the concept of the martyr by that of the 'spiritual man,' to depict eschatology, results from a clash between Clement and the Gnostics. The negative statement about martyrdom in the

⁴³ See Méhat, *Étude*, 292f.

⁴⁴ See Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, II, *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus* (Utrecht/Antwerp: Spectrum, 1953), 12; Manlio Simonetti, *Letteratura cristiana antica greca e latina* (Florence/Milan: Sansoni-Accademia, 1969), 107; Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Storia della letteratura cristiana antica greca e latina*, I, *Da Paolo all'età constantiniana* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1995), 369–377. Clement seems to give his interpretation of the literary genre he chooses for the *Stromateis* at least in *Strom.* I 11–12, IV 1–3 and VII 111, 1–3.

seventh book of the *Stromateis* is also a consequence of this clash. How should this conclusion be read?

We should look at the new scholarly perspectives on Christian martyrdom. Marco Rizzi, putting Bowersock's forays into the Alexandrian historical framework of the second century,⁴⁵ asserts: "in Clemente [...] l'allargamento del significato del martirio non va solo nella direzione di una sua 'spiritualizzazione,' bensì anche dell'allargamento delle sue valenze e delle sue implicazioni," which means that we should take into account the 'public impact' of the martyr in front of the court and the political authorities, its 'efficacy' in terms of leadership.⁴⁶ This may encourage us to reconsider the anti-Gnostic polemic, the context of Clement's four promises to produce a psychological treatise. Following Rizzi's reading, we may suppose that Clement's dispute with the Gnostics reached its most intense level during the persecutions. So it is after the persecutions that Clement developed the most complete version of his psychology, and consequently he is critical of martyrdom *after* the time of persecutions.⁴⁷

To close, our exploration of psychology, pneumatology, and martyrdom has led us to suppose something more about Clement's biography. For instance, it could explain why Clement, according to Eusebius, left Alexandria: his idea of Christianity might have lost its battle with the Gnostics, and as a consequence he could have been forced to leave.

⁴⁵ As mentioned above (see footnote 1), Glen W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, shows that 'martyrdom' and 'confession' were synonyms in late antiquity. So being a martyr did not necessarily mean 'to die,' but simply to confess one's faith in front of the Roman political authorities in order to become a hero for new proselytes and to create new leaderships. This new interpretation of martyrdom replaces the thesis of Christel Butterweck, "*Martyriumssucht*" in der Alten Kirche? Studien zur Darstellung und Deutung frühchristlicher Martyrien (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), endorsed by Silke-Petra Bergjan (who suggests that Clement reacts to Basilides' idea of 'Martyrium als Strafe.') Cf. Bergjan, *Der fürsorgende Gott. Der Begriff der ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ Gottes in der apologetischen Literatur der Alten Kirche* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2002), 137 note 70, 146.

⁴⁶ See Rizzi, "Martirio," 64.

⁴⁷ So we do not say that Clement wrote the whole of *Strom.* VI–VII after *Strom.* II–V; our discussion refers only to the main psychological contents of Clement's work.

STROMATEIS VII AND CLEMENT'S
HINTS AT THE THEORY OF APOKATASTASIS

Ilaria Ramelli

In the framework of a systematic investigation into the concept of *apokatastasis* in patristic thought, which I have now been carrying on for more than a decade, I am going to examine some passages of book seven of the *Stromateis*, corroborated by other evidence in Clement's work and thought that can help scholars to establish whether, and if so in what sense, Clement can be regarded as a precursor of Origen's (and his followers') doctrine of *apokatastasis*. My research will avail itself of philological, philosophical, and theological arguments.

Clement's very use of the terminology of *apokatastasis* (ἀποκατάστασις and ἀποκαθίστημι) and of terms expressing time or eternity,¹ albeit not sufficiently taken into account by scholars, is revealing. In contrast with Justin,² but like Origen subsequently, Clement often uses αἰδῖος (coming from the classical philosophical terminology and denoting absolute eternity), in addition to αἰώνιος (a scriptural term, which never means 'eternal' unless it refers to God).³ In some cases, Clement joins both terms in the same passage, for instance in *Strom.* IV 136. Here the αἰδῖος θεωρία, 'eternal contemplation,' is said to be 'a living substance' which never passes away, and to consist in the knowledge of God and salvation in the world to come (τὴν σωτηρίαν τὴν αἰώνιον). It is not αἰώνιος that specifies that this salvation is eternal, but αἰδῖος, which refers to the contemplation that is identified with this salvation. Αἰδῖος, which means 'eternal' in the absolute sense, in

¹ For a detailed treatment see Ilaria Ramelli and David Konstan, *Terms for Eternity* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2007; new edition 2011), 102–116.

² On whose use of the terminology of eternity see Ramelli and Konstan, *Terms for Eternity*, 96–102.

³ The only exception in the Greek panorama is the Platonic technical terminology; in the Bible, however, and in the rest of Greek philosophy, this term does not denote eternity, but it has a range of different meanings (in Scripture, most of these meanings come from the vague and polysemic Hebrew *olām*, regularly rendered as αἰών and αἰώνιος in the LXX). In the Bible it can assume the meaning of 'eternal' only if it refers to God, and only for the intrinsic eternity ascribed to the Godhead itself, and not because of any semantic value of αἰώνιος as 'eternal.'

Clement's works often refers to God or to what pertains to God.⁴ To indicate strictly 'eternal life'—besides the fact that it pertains to the world to come⁵—, Clement uses 'life αἰδιος,' in a number of passages, 'life αἰρεπτος' (*Quis dives* 42, 20; *Protr.* 7, 1; *Strom.* VII 10 as a consequence of choosing virtue), τὸ αἰδιον ζῆν, 'eternal living' in *Paed.* I 103, and βίος αἰδιος in *Strom.* V 15. One of the many descriptions of eternal life is that found in *Strom.* VII 57: the blessed become like a "stable light, which persists eternally (αἰδιως), immutable in every way and at every time."⁶

In a number of passages, indeed, Clement defines salvation as absolutely eternal, often also describing it in terms of the health of the soul (in Philonic terms), for instance in *Strom.* VII 48 (see also *Paed.* I 65, 2; 96, 3), whereas nowhere does he describe damnation in this way. In *Paed.* I 74 Clement repeats that "the mode of its economy [sc. of the divine Logos-Pedagogue] is various, with a view to salvation"; indeed, "it is appropriate even to inflict a wound, not in a deadly way, but by way of salvation (σωτηρίως), and so, with a small pain, save a person from eternal death (αἰδιον κερδάναντα θάνατον)": eternal death is mentioned, but is to be denied thanks to divine providence or 'economy.'⁷ The permanently blessed state of the 'gnostic' or perfected

⁴ For instance, God's goodness and beneficence are absolutely eternal (αἰδιος), like God's justice (*Strom.* V 141), two aspects—justice and goodness—that both Clement and Origen endeavoured to reconcile against 'Gnostics' and Marcionites, in a theodicy framework in which the doctrine of *apokatastasis* itself is inscribed as a prominent element. In *Protr.* 84, 6 Clement draws on Plato's definition of time in his *Timaeus* as an image (εἰκὼν) of eternity, and attributes eternity to God as a 'today' that is absolutely eternal (σήμερον αἰδιος) and extends forever; it is 'an image of the ages,' αἰώνων ἐστὶν εἰκὼν, rather than Plato's 'image of eternity' (αἰώνας), since Clement has recourse to the biblical terminology and therefore uses the plural; he conflates it with Plato's own use. In *Protr.* 105, 4, God is "the eternal (αἰδιος) giver of good." Apart from God the Father, who is described as "eternal (αἰδιον) light" in *Paed.* I 32, 1, Clement attributes absolute eternity to Jesus / the Son as well, for instance in *Protr.* 120, 2 (αἰδιος οὐτος Ἰησοῦς); 121, 2: "the Son, eternal (αἰδιος) Victor," and *Paed.* I 27, in which Christ is described as saviour and pedagogue: "the teaching is absolutely eternal (αἰδιος) salvation of the eternal (αἰδιος) Saviour." Eternity is attributed to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, in a number of other passages. Also, in *Protr.* 2, 4, the new law given by Christ is said to be absolutely eternal (αἰδιος) because it will last forever, even after the end of this world. The grace and the truth of the Logos, too, are eternal (αἰδιος, *Paed.* I 60, 1; *Strom.* I 57).

⁵ For this, Clement, like many other Greek Fathers, uses ζωὴ αἰώνιος and ζωὴ μέλλουσα, for instance in *Protr.* 85, 4: "[piety] that bears the proclamation of life, both that in the present and that in the future (τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης)."

⁶ Clement employs several expressions with αἰδιος which refer to eternal life, such as "eternal awakening from toils" (*Paed.* II 80), "the eternity of life" (*Paed.* II 82), or "eternal repose" which is situated in the world to come (*Paed.* I 102). Absolutely eternal salvation is an αἰδιος σωτηρία in *Protr.* 85, 4; so also in 93, 2; *Strom.* VI 2; *Paed.* I 27.

⁷ Eternal life is also represented as an 'eternal gift' in *Protr.* 94, 1. The eternal (αἰδιος) food is the word of God, which eternally preserves those who believe (*Paed.* II 7). Likewise, in

soul is described in *Strom.* VII 68 as an “eternally (ἀϊδίως) looking at God Almighty, face to face.” In *Strom.* VI 75, this blessedness is described as that of one “who dines eternally (ἀϊδίως) and without ever reaching satiety in the inextinguishable joy of contemplation.” The exclusion of satiety will be essential to Origen’s concept of *apokatastasis*, and will further inspire Gregory of Nyssa’s *epektasis*.⁸ In *Strom.* VII 13 the blessed achieve “eternal (ἀϊδιος) joy for aeons without end”: here αἰῶνες, in the plural, is used in the Biblical sense to indicate long periods of time, which, since they are declared to be “without end,” coincide with the notion of eternity.⁹

Like Origen afterwards, Clement describes eternal life both as ἀϊδιος (strictly ‘eternal’) and as αἰώνιος, but the infernal fire *only* as αἰώνιον (meaning ‘of the other world’), and *never* as ἀϊδιον. In *Paed.* I 29 Clement glosses the Biblical expression ‘αἰώνιος life’ with ‘ἀϊδιος life.’ As usual, when Clement quotes Scripture, he uses αἰώνιος, whereas when he speaks with his own voice, he prefers the philosophical term, ἀϊδιος, but only when applicable: thus, he uses the latter in reference to God, or to life—since God is absolutely eternal and life in the world to come will be absolutely eternal, at least *a parte post*—but never to death or evil or punishment. For life in the world to come is also eternal, whereas fire or punishment or death in the world to come are never said to be so, either in Clement’s works or in the Bible, on which Clement based himself. Only in *Protr.* 115, 3 does Clement describe sin and the darkness of error as “eternal (ἀϊδιος) death,” but, again, precisely to exclude it, since he immediately adds: “But there is, there is, the Truth which has cried out, *From the darkness there will shine a light.*”

What is more, Clement, like Origen after him, explicitly refers ἀϊδιος, indicating absolute eternity, to the eventual *apokatastasis*, which he mentions by name, and which will follow purification, in *Strom.* VII 56, 2–6. Here, he identifies the final *apokatastasis* with the state of perfection that is made—according to Clement, just as according to Origen after him—of

Strom. V 87 eternal life is also described as “eternal (ἀϊδιος) benefaction in accord with the providence of God.”

⁸ In the same connection, spiritual foods are those that are “supplied eternally (ἀϊδίως) for the growth of the soul,” which is clearly an eternal growth (*Strom.* VI 90). Likewise, in *Strom.* V 70, the food for the souls is truth and is described as an absolutely eternal (ἀϊδιος) food. Eschatological blessedness is depicted in *Paed.* II 100 as an “eternal (ἀϊδιος) state of chastity.”

⁹ A special use of ἀϊδιος occurs in *Paed.* III 44 in a scriptural quotation from Jude 6: the evil angels are bound by “eternal chains (ἀϊδιος)” until the final judgment. It seems that this eternity, which cannot be *a parte post*, given that the duration indicated is “until” the Judgment, refers to a duration superior to that of the present aeon. For the imprisonment of the wicked angels occurred before this aeon.

both γνώσις and ἀγάπη, with preeminence given to the latter, and as the end of an ascending process:

Love (ἀγάπη) comes after knowledge (γνώσις), and inheritance/possession/enjoyment (κληρονομία) after love. And this is achieved when one depends on the Lord both thanks to faith and thanks to knowledge and thanks to love, and once one has ascended together with Him where there is God, the guardian of our faith and of our love. [...] This completes what is not yet completed and what is already perfect, teaching in advance *the future life that we shall have with the gods in God*, once we have been *liberated from any chastisement and suffering that we (shall) bear because of our sins in view of a salvific (σωτήριον) education*: after the extinction of this penalty, rewards and honours are bestowed upon those who have been *made perfect*, after completing their *purification* and every other obligation as well, although saint and among saints. Once people have become *pure* of heart, in accordance with what pertains to the Lord, *apokatastasis awaits them, in eternal contemplation* (προσμένει τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῇ αἰδίᾳ ἀποκατάστασις).¹⁰ And they will be ‘gods,’ sharing their abodes with the other ‘gods,’ those who have been arrayed first by the Saviour. Thus, knowledge quickly leads to *purification*.¹¹

Eternal contemplation in the final state which is *apokatastasis* will come after the necessary purification of one’s sins through an instruction that is overtly said to be ‘salvific;’ only then will human beings enjoy “*apokatastasis* in eternal contemplation.” This condition is also identified by Clement with the eventual *theosis*, just as it will be by Origen,¹² and it will involve both human beings and angels. As Origen will later do on the basis of 1 Cor 15:24–28, Clement connects the final *apokatastasis* to voluntary submission to the Lord, theorizing a ‘salvific passage’ from incredulity to faith and from faith to ‘gnosis.’ The latter, in turn, brings about purification and finally yields to love, which is—for Clement as for Origen—the condition of *apokatastasis* and of stability in it.¹³ Clement here has inheritance, possession and enjoyment (in the sense of *fruitio*) follow love, but elsewhere, as I have pointed

¹⁰ Or else (but less probably, because ‘contemplation’ is in the dative and not in the accusative preceded by εἰς or πρὸς): “the restoration to eternal contemplation awaits them.” The least probable translation of all (but nevertheless grammatically possible) links the datives to πρὸς in προσμένει: “*apokatastasis* awaits them, in addition to eternal contemplation.” This is the least probable rendering, because it intimates that *apokatastasis* and eternal contemplation are two separate things.

¹¹ *Strom.* VII 56, 2–6.

¹² See Ilaria Ramelli, “Deification/Theosis,” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010).

¹³ See my “Origen and Apokatastasis: A Reassessment,” in S. Kaczmarek and H. Pietras (eds.), *Origeniana decima* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 649–670.

out, he makes it clear that this enjoyment is not satiety (κόρος), so that *apokatastasis* seems to be an eternal tension, and not exactly a static fulfilment. Punishments are purificatory, and this purification is the result of the illuminative action of knowledge. Thus, their end is salvation; indeed, after this purification Clement presents the very *telos*, which is *theosis*, life with God in eternal contemplation, that is, *apokatastasis*, as Clement himself names it. Clement here, like Origen after him, characterizes the final *apokatastasis* as absolutely eternal, αἰδῖος, and not simply as αἰώνιος or pertaining to the other aeon.¹⁴

The term ἀποκατάστασις is attested to in a number of further passages in Clement, who connects it again with the *telos*, since *apokatastasis* coincides in his view with the eventual state of perfection. This is why he refers the *apokatastasis* again to the ‘gnostic,’ that is, the perfect Christian. In *Strom.* VII 57, 1–4 Clement depicts the perfection of the soul endowed with ‘gnosis,’ which dwells in what is divine and holy, as “*apokatastasis* or restitution to the highest place of rest,” εἰς τὸν κορυφαῖον ἀποκαταστήσῃ τῆς ἀναπαύσεως τόπον. This will mean to see God ‘face to face,’ with a pure heart. The ‘rest’ or ἀνάπαυσις that Clement here relates to *apokatastasis* reminds me of the rest and comfort (ἀνάψυξις) coming from ‘the face of the Lord,’ which is related to the ‘universal *apokatastasis*’ (ἀποκατάστασις πάντων) in Acts 3:20 f., in a speech of Peter’s. This passage will be employed by Origen several times in reference to the eventual universal *apokatastasis*.¹⁵

Contemplation, eternity, and *apokatastasis* are also joined together in *Ecl.* 57, 2, which is crucial to the present investigation:

According to the Apostle, then, those who will be *at the peak of apokatastasis* (ἐν τῇ ἄκρῃ ἀποκαταστάσει) are those who were created first: and the first created will be the thrones, although they are powers, since God rested in them, just as he reposes too in those who believe. For each person, according to her own individual degree of spiritual progress, has a certain knowledge of God, and God rests in this *knowledge*, since those who have known him have become absolutely *eternal* (αἰδῖων) thanks to their *knowledge*.

There are other fundamental passages in which Clement treats the doctrine of *apokatastasis* and uses the very terminology of *apokatastasis*. In *Strom.* II 134, 4 life in the world to come (αἰώνιος) is called the *telos*, the ‘end’ or ‘goal’

¹⁴ See Ilaria Ramelli, “Origene ed il lessico dell’eternità,” *Adamantius* 14 (2008) 100–129; “Αἰώνιος and Αἰών in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa,” *SP* 47 (2010) 57–62.

¹⁵ See my “Matt 17:11,” *Maia* NS 61 (2009) 107–127.

of the present life, in a quotation from Rom 6:22 (also quoted in *Strom.* VI 11), according to which the *telos* of sanctification is eternal life. Now, it is pivotal to note that in his comment on this sentence Clement both claims that the *telos* is the *υιοθεσία* and the *ἐξομοίωσις* with God, and expressly affirms that Paul teaches that this end, to which sanctification tends, is precisely the hoped-for *apokatastasis*:

τέλος διδάσκει τὴν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀποκατάστασιν.

[Paul] teaches that the end is the restoration (*apokatastasis*) we hope for.¹⁶

In this way, Clement openly identifies life in the world to come with *apokatastasis* or final restoration itself, which, for Clement, just as for Origen, is the *telos* of all. It is probable that Clement also had in mind 1 Cor 15:24–28, in which Paul described the *telos* as the submission of all enemies to Christ, the elimination of evil and death, and the final presence of God “all in all.”¹⁷ In this passage (Origen’s favourite in support of his doctrine of *apokatastasis*), just as in Rom 6:22, Paul really can be taken as teaching that the *telos* is the hoped-for *apokatastasis*.

In *Strom.* II 37, 5 Clement describes God’s Wisdom (the first *ἐπίνοια* of Christ in Origen) as the cause of all creation and of the *apokatastasis* of the elect: “[T]here is the risk that ignorance, as a causal principle, preceded God’s Wisdom, the whole of creation, and the *apokatastasis* of the elect.”¹⁸ These elects are the ‘gnostics,’ those who have reached knowledge, as is clear from *Strom.* IV 40, 2. Here Clement describes the perfect ‘gnostic’ and observes that such a person is really a ‘peacemaker’ in that she has subjugated all of her passions, which wage war against reason; since such people “have lived with science, good deeds, and true logos, they will be restored to the most loving adoration.” The lexicon is again precisely that of *ἀποκατάστασις* and *ἀποκαθίστημι*. The final *apokatastasis* will take place when all have defeated their passions and have become perfect ‘gnostics.’

Indeed, the universality of the final restoration is attested to in *Strom.* III 63, 4, in which Clement remarks:

¹⁶ *Strom.* II 134, 4.

¹⁷ See Ilaria Ramelli, “*In Illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius ...* (1 Cor 15,27–28): Gregory of Nyssa’s Exegesis, Its Derivations from Origen, and Early Patristic Interpretations Related to Origen’s,” *SP* 44 (2010) 259–274.

¹⁸ On this point see Paolo Siniscalco, “ἀποκαθίστημι e ἀποκατάστασις nella tradizione patristica fino a Ireneo,” *SP* 3 (1961) 380–396; and briefly Andrew C. Itter, “The Restoration of the Elect,” *SP* 41 (2006) 169–174.

It is necessary that generation and corruption exist in creation until all the elects have appeared and thus *apokatastasis* (ἀποκατάστασις) takes place, so that even substances themselves return to their original seat.

A clear hint to the universality of *apokatastasis* is also given in *Strom.* III 70, 1, in which Clement sees universal concord (one of the main traits of *apokatastasis*, according to Origen) as being exemplified by the ‘three,’ in the middle of whom the Lord is in “the only church, the only human being, the only (human) nature.” This anticipates the ultimate identification between church and humanity that will be developed by both Origen and Gregory of Nyssa.¹⁹

The use of αἰώνιος is very frequent in Clement, especially when he cites or alludes to the Bible. The Biblical syntagm “life in the world to come (αἰώνιος)” is often found in his works, and in *Protr.* 83 appears as a synonym for “salvation bestowed by God,” in contrast to the punishment and fire made ready by the Lord for the devil and his angels.²⁰ In the face of Clement’s abundant use of αἰώνιος with reference to life, the mere two occurrences of the Biblical fire αἰώνιον, the fire in the world to come, appear exceptionally sparse. As for the only two occurrences of ‘αἰδίοθις death’ (‘αἰώνιος death’ never occurs), they are found in passages in which the notion of an eternal death

¹⁹ See Ilaria Ramelli, “Clement’s Notion of the Logos ‘All Things as One.’ Its Alexandrian Background in Philo and its Developments in Origen and Gregory Nyssen,” in Z. Plese and R. Hirsch-Luipold (eds.), *Alexandrian Personae: Scholarly Culture and Religious Traditions in Ancient Alexandria (1st ct. BCE – 4th ct. CE)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), forthcoming.

²⁰ In *Quis dives* 20, 2, salvation is described as amassing wealth “in that intelligible place which is taught to us by God,” in knowing how to make use of those which are indifferent things (in the Stoic sense), and in setting out in this manner towards the life to come (αἰώνιος). One of several important juxtapositions of ‘αἰώνιος life’ and the world to come, which further indicate that ‘αἰώνιος life’ is life in the αἰών to come, is found *ibid.* 4, 10: “whoever will leave his parents, brothers, and riches for me and for the happy news, will receive in return a hundred times as much: now in this present world ..., and in that which is coming life αἰώνιος.” In *Ecl.* 11, 2, Clement again contrasts those things that are present with invisible things that pertain to the world to come, and refers to the latter as ‘αἰώνια goods’ (12, 1); likewise, in *Quis dives* 39, 1, those who are immersed in ignorance are declared to be unable to enjoy ‘αἰώνια goods’ (see also *Strom.* III 56). In *Strom.* V 63, life in the world to come is contrasted with real death, which consists in not recognizing the Father. In addition to ‘αἰώνιος life,’ other broadly equivalent expressions are used by Clement that contain αἰώνιος, such as ‘αἰώνιος tent’ or ‘abode’ (*Quis dives* 31, 6). Moreover, Clement, like the Bible, refers αἰώνιος to God, Christ (*Strom.* VII 16: ‘the αἰώνιος Logos’), and what pertains to God (e.g. *Quis dives* 42, 20: God’s majesty is αἰώνιος); the meaning is ‘eternal’ in these cases because of the reference to God, who is eternal, and not because of the intrinsic sense of the adjective. So, for instance, the truth, qua work of the Logos-Son, is said to be αἰώνιος in *Paed.* I 60. In *Strom.* VI 122, 3 the works and words of God are αἰώνια, and so on.

is immediately denied, and there is not a single occurrence of 'ἄτδιον fire' or 'ἄτδιος punishment' or the like. The same will also obtain in Origen.

In investigating the meaning of the terms that indicate time and eternity in Clement and his possible role in the development of the doctrine of *apokatastasis*, it must be considered, too, that Clement seems to have anticipated Origen's notion of a succession of aeons prior to the final *apokatastasis*.²¹ These aeons, in Origen's view, provide rational creatures with the necessary opportunities and time to improve morally, develop spiritually, and be corrected, with a view to the *telos*, which is the perfect reintegration of all. Indeed, according to Photius (*Bibl. cod.* 109), in his lost *Hypotyposeis* Clement spoke of more aeons prior to the creation of Adam.²²

Clement, who probably knew Irenaeus,²³ clearly uses the terminology and concept of *anakephalaiosis*, which is in agreement with the doctrine of *apokatastasis*. The most interesting case is *Paed.* II 75, 1–2, in the 'mystical interpretation' (μυστικὸν ἐνταῦθα) of Moses' burning bush and Jesus's crown of thorns: the former, Clement observes, marked the beginning of the manifestation of the Logos on earth through the law; the latter marked the end of the permanence of Christ-Logos on earth and represents the recapitulation or *anakephalaiosis* of the salvific economy of the Logos, who is the beginning and the end of the world.²⁴ Here, the notion of *anakephalaiosis* comes close to that of Irenaeus, related to the *telos* and to the salvific economy (in

²¹ On this notion in Origen see e.g. Ramelli, "Αἰώνιος and Αἰών," and eadem, "The Universal and Eternal Validity of Jesus's High-Priestly Sacrifice. The Epistle to the Hebrews in Support of Origen's Theory of Apokatastasis," in R.J. Bauckham et al. (eds.), *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 210–221; Panayiotis Tzamalikos, *Origen: Cosmology and Ontology of Time* (VChr Suppl. 77; Leiden: Brill, 2006) and idem, *Origen: Philosophy of History and Eschatology* (VChr Suppl. 85; Leiden: Brill, 2007), with my respective reviews in *Rivista di Filosofia Neoscolastica* 99 (2007) 177–181 and 100 (2008) 453–458.

²² See Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria on Trial. The Evidence of 'Heresy' from Photius' Bibliotheca* (VChr Suppl. 101; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 39–54. My review is forthcoming in *Gnomon*. I suspect that κόσμοι may be a misunderstanding for αἰώνες, which, of course, is quite different and, in Clement's and Origen's view, had a Biblical foundation. Indeed, the same mistake is sometimes clear in sources concerning Origen.

²³ Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* is attested in Egyptian Greek manuscripts, and was probably introduced into Egypt via Rome. The early proto-orthodox Christians of Alexandria used Irenaeus. Cf. Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press/British Academy, 1979), 13–14.

²⁴ Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐπαύσατο τῆς νομοθεσίας καὶ τῆς εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίας ὁ λόγος, ὁ κύριος μυστικῶς αὐτὸς ἀναστέφεται ἀκάνθῃ, ἐνθενδε ἀπὼν ἐκέισε ὅθεν κατήλθεν, ἀνακεφαλαιοῦμενος τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς καθόδου τῆς παλαιάς, ὅπως ὁ διὰ βάτου τὸ πρῶτον ὀφθείη, ὁ λόγος, διὰ τῆς ἀκάνθης ὕστερον ἀναληφθεὶς μίᾳς ἔργον τὰ πάντα δεῖξῃ δυνάμει, εἰς ὧν ἐνός ὄντος τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος αἰῶνος.

Strom. IV 10, 2–3 the relevant verb, repeated twice, refers to the commandment of love as recapitulating the whole law,²⁵ a concept that appears again in *Strom.* VII 105, 4–5).²⁶

Germes of the theory of *apokatastasis* are indeed found in the writings of Clement.²⁷ In this connection, it is significant that he knew the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and considered it to be as inspired as writings that subsequently formed the New Testament. This is why he commented on that *Apocalypse* in his *Hypotyposeis*, as is attested by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* VI 14, 1), who states that in this work Clement commented on all the books of the New Testament, “without omitting [...] the so-called *Apocalypse of Peter*.”²⁸ It is probable that Origen, too, regarded the *Apocalypse of Peter* as authoritative, and both of them found in that text the final, eschatological liberation of sinners from the ‘river of fire’ representing hell.²⁹

Like Origen, whose doctrine of *apokatastasis* developed from his anti-Gnostic arguments,³⁰ Clement, in connection with his own anti-Gnostic polemic, stressed individual free will and responsibility,³¹ without considering it to be at odds with God’s providential operation throughout history. Clement, whose main concern in his anti-Gnostic battle, like Origen’s, was theodicy, amazingly often quotes or echoes—in full or just in its last sentence—*Resp.* X 617e: “It will not be the *daimon* to choose you, but you will choose your own *daimon* for yourselves. The first sorted will be the first to choose the kind of life to which s/he will necessarily be bound. Virtue has

²⁵ Ἐν τούτῳ μόνῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται τῷ λόγῳ, τῷ ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν ... πᾶσα ἐντολὴ ἐν τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται.

²⁶ Τὸ οὐ μοιχεύσεις, οὐ κλέψεις, οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολὴ, ἐν τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν.

²⁷ John R. Sachs, “Apocatastasis in Patristic Theology,” *Theological Studies* 54 (1993) 617–640, esp. Section 1 on Clement; further arguments in Ilaria Ramelli, *Gregorio di Nissa Sull’Anima e la Resurrezione* (Milan: Bompiani-Università Cattolica, 2007), 833, 843, 849, 883–900.

²⁸ See James Brooks, “Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon,” *Second Century* 9 (1992) 41–55; Annewies van den Hoek, “Clement and Origen as Sources on ‘Noncanonical’ Scriptural Traditions,” in G. Dorival and A. Le Boulluec (eds.), *Origeniana sexta* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 93–113.

²⁹ Cf. my “Origen, Bardaisan, and the Origin of Universal Salvation,” *HTR* 102 (2009) 135–168.

³⁰ I demonstrated this in “La coerenza della soteriologia origeniana: dalla polemica contro il determinismo gnostico all’universale restaurazione escatologica,” in *Pagani e cristiani alla ricerca della salvezza. Atti del XXXIV Incontro di Studiosi dell’Antichità Cristiana* (Rome: Augustinianum, 2006), 661–688.

³¹ E.g. in *Strom.* I 4,1; II 60–71; V 136; indeed, like Origen, he asserted this of every rational creature, including the devil, who was not forced by nature to choose evil (I 83–84). In *Strom.* II, chapter 3, he maintains the freedom of human will in his polemic against the Valentinians (also in *Strom.* I 115–116) and Basilides.

no master (ἀρετὴ δὲ ἀδέσποτον); the more each of us honours it, the more s/he will have of it; the less one honours it, the less one will have. Thus, responsibility for this lies with the one who chooses: *God is not responsible* (αἰτία ἐλόμενου, θεὸς ἀναίτιος).” The same notion was hammered home by Plato in other passages as well (*Resp.* II 379bc; *Tim.* 42de; *Leg.* X 904c); it will return, for instance, in Porphyry (*Marc.* 12) and in the *Corpus Hermeticum* IV 8, besides Maximus of Tyre and a certain second-century ‘Maximus’ quoted by Eusebius, and even in inscriptions.³²

Clement cites or echoes this passage of Plato in *Paed.* I 69, 1, but also in *Strom.* I 4, 1 (cf. IV 153, 1–2); I 84; II 75; IV 150; V 136, in which, after quoting Plato, Clement adduces testimonies from Bacchylides, Pindar, and Euripides. In *Strom.* II 60 ff. Clement treats at length the problem of human responsibility with full casuistry and examples from both the Bible and the classics, and insists that one’s intention is what counts most in the assessment of one’s responsibility, and whatever is done out of ignorance or necessity cannot be regarded as a responsible act (II 60–61; see also II 62–64). Soon after this casuistry, Clement emphasizes God’s mercy even in respect to voluntary faults, since God prefers the sinner’s repentance and conversion to his death (II 66). Here Clement uses therapeutic metaphors that are dear to him, and that will be developed by Origen with a view to the *apokatastasis* discourse (II 69–71). Clement, like Origen, applies the criterion of free will and responsibility to the devil, just as to all other rational creatures: he did not choose evil because he was forced by his nature to do so (*Strom.* I 83–84); here Clement also repeats Plato’s principle, θεὸς ἀναίτιος, which he had already introduced in *Strom.* I 4, 1. This passage in *Strom.* I 83–84, which already mentions Plato and Socrates, is surrounded by examples taken from Chrysippus’s discussion of free will. Two other Christian Platonists who were well acquainted with Clement’s works will remember Plato’s statement that virtue is something ἀδέσποτον: Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. The latter, in his *De anima et resurrectione*, will take up the notion of virtue as an ἀδέσποτον in the context of the process through which the soul is liberated from evil and from enslavement to evil, so as to return to God the Good, who is free; the soul, by imitating it and adhering to it, becomes free, just as God is free.³³

³² See on this my “‘Maximus’ on Evil, Matter, and God: Arguments for the Identification of the Source of Eusebius *PE* VII 22,” *Adamantius* 16 (2010) 230–255.

³³ See my “Baptism in Gregory of Nyssa’s Theology and its Orientation to Eschatology,” in D. Hellholm et al. (eds.), *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism*, vol. II (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011),

Clement thinks that repentance and conversion take place thanks to God, but without detriment to human free will, because “God wants us to save ourselves by ourselves” (*Strom.* VI 96, 1–3). Clement adds that some people, although they have very good innate qualities, detach themselves from virtue and the Good (who is God) “out of carelessness.” Origen, too, will repeatedly ascribe carelessness to those who, choosing evil, neglect their spiritual improvement. In *Strom.* III 58 Clement, echoing the Johannine Prologue, emphasizes that “we are not children of desire, but of (free) will” (see also I 4). This is why humans should not be governed by impulses, but by reason. In *Strom.* III 65 Clement insists again that the life and lot of each is determined by one’s own voluntary choices.

Clement’s perspective is constantly determined by his polemic against Valentinian predestinationism and the division of humanity into classes or ‘natures’ doomed in advance to perdition or salvation. Sin depends on one’s free assent given to an impulse. The fundamental theorization is found in *Strom.* I 83–84 and II 54–55, in which Clement uses the theory, both Stoic and Platonic, of assent. The latter, he argues (here just as in I 4), depends entirely on the moral agent. The freedom of the moral agent, however, is not left without divine providence: “The Lord clearly reveals that our errors and sins depend on us. But he suggests kinds of therapy that correspond to the various passions” (II 69), since passions must be cured by that will which is inspired by reason.³⁴

Indeed, Clement often stresses that the salvation of each must be voluntary,³⁵ that is, spontaneous. He is adamant that human decisions are free, but at the same time a good dose of (Platonic-Socratic and Stoic) ethical intellectualism seems to me to enter his thought:³⁶ evil things are chosen

1205–1232, and eadem, “Gregory Nyssen’s Position in Late-Antique Debates on Slavery and Poverty and the Role of Ascetics,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5 (2012) 87–118.

³⁴ See Richard Sorabji, *Emotions and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), with my review in *Aevum* 77 (2003) 217–221; Margaret R. Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); see also my *Stoici romani minori* (Milan: Bompiani, 2008) for this problem in Roman Stoicism, and Margaret Graver, “The Weeping Wise: Stoic and Epicurean Consolations in Seneca’s 99th Epistle,” in Th. Fögen (ed.), *Tears in the Greco-Roman World* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 235–252. Research into *pathe*, *propatheiai*, and *eupatheiai* in the New Testament is ongoing.

³⁵ E.g. in *Strom.* I 35,1; II 11, 2; 27, 4; III 3, 8; 12, 1; 42, 4; IV 170, 4; V 7,1–2; 83,1; VI 96,2; VII 6,3.

³⁶ I should warn that a specialist such as Dietmar Wyrwa, to whom I am grateful for discussing with me both per litteras and face to face, is inclined to minimize ethical intellectualism in Clement’s thought, especially for Clement’s insistence on free will. However, Patristic thinkers who embraced ethical intellectualism, such as Gregory of Nyssa and Origen himself, were adamant that human will is free.

only when they are deemed good, and this happens because of a wrong opinion—thus, at the intellectual level—which the moral subject fails to correct as a result of foolishness and ignorance. The same perspective can also be found in *Strom.* I 84, 2–4, in which he sticks to the Socratic principle that nobody chooses evil *qua* evil, but by deeming it good.³⁷ Ethical intellectualism will be a main trait of Origen's philosophy, and will strongly characterize Gregory of Nyssa's thought as well. The latter will even use it to explain the so-called original sin: the first human beings decided to eat the forbidden fruit because, although this was something evil, they deemed it something good. This mistake in their judgement was due to the serpent's deception.³⁸ Clement himself, in *Strom.* I 84, 6, soon after the enunciation of the Socratic principle that nobody chooses evil *qua* evil, but only by deeming it good, mentions the devil as the one who induces false impressions and thus makes evil look good.

Punishment for such mistakes resulting from deception, obnubilation, and ignorance is regarded by Clement as right, but at the same time he also defines God's justice as 'salvific.' Indeed, another aspect of Clement's thought that bears on the theory of *apokatastasis* and which will be developed by Origen is his insistence on the pedagogical and therapeutic value of all suffering inflicted by God³⁹ and on God's salvific will and providence for each and every creature: "everything, both in general and in individual cases, is ordered by the Lord of the universe *for the purpose of universal salvation*," since "God is good and from eternity and eternally saves through his Son" and "the task of salvific Justice is to lead each being to what is better" (*Strom.* VII 12; see also I 86, 1–2). This means that God's justice aims at salvation; therefore, suitable punishments, or better instructions (παιδεύσεις), are inflicted by God in order to save, so as to produce repentance and salvation even in those who are hardened in sin:

And the necessary corrections (παιδεύσεις), inflicted *out of goodness* (ἀγαθότητι) by the great Judge who presides, both through the angels who surround him, and through several preliminary judgments, and again through

³⁷ See e.g. *Strom.* II 26, 5; 62, 3; IV 168, 2; VI 113, 3.

³⁸ See also my "La colpa antecedente come ermeneutica del male in sede storico-religiosa e nei testi biblici," in I. Cardellini (ed.), *Atti del XIV Convegno di Studi vetero-testamentari dell'Associazione Biblica Italiana: Origine e fenomenologia del male: le vie della catarsi vetero-testamentaria = Ricerche Storico-Bibliche* 19 (2007) 11–64.

³⁹ E.g. in *Strom.* II 69–71; VII 102, 1–3; 34, 1–3 regarding the αἰώνιον fire, which is not 'eternal' but 'of the other world.' See above for this terminology in Clement. Clement also regarded this world as a place of instruction.

the definitive judgment (τῆς κρίσεως τῆς παντελοῦς), *compel* those who have hardened too much⁴⁰ to *repent* (ἐκβιάζονται μετανοεῖν).

Even punishments decided at the last judgment are said to aim at inducing repentance in sinners. This clearly implies that repentance can take place even after the last judgment, and even in those who are the most hardened in sin. Moreover, once these punishments have brought about the sinners' conversion/repentance, they will cease. This idea will be further developed by Origen, at least in his more esoteric teaching.⁴¹

Indeed, God's providence operates in two ways, either through good deeds or through punishment, but in the end of both lies salvation, through conversion from evil to virtue (*Strom.* I 173). According to Clement, just like Origen afterwards, salvific repentance/conversion is always possible, "both here on earth and on the other side," because God's goodness operates absolutely everywhere (*Strom.* IV 37, 7; see also VI 45–47). In much the same way, the possibility of being saved even after death is expressed by Clement in his theology of Christ's descent to hell, which will be taken over by Origen as well, and by Gregory of Nyssa. The latter will even devote a whole work, *De tridui spatio*, to the salvific import of this descent. In *Strom.* VI 45–47 Clement observes:

The Lord brought the Good News even to those who were in hell. Do not the Scriptures declare that the Lord announced the Good News to those who had died in the Flood, or, better, had been caught in it, and to those who had been kept in prison? [...] The apostles, following the Lord, announced the Good News even to those who were *in hell* [...] that, *after repenting* of their errors/sins, they might be among those who belong to Almighty God, even though they *happened to confess God in another place, and they might be saved*, each one according to his or her own degree of knowledge. Thus, *the Saviour is active, because his work is to save*. And this is what he has done, by *dragging to salvation those who wanted to believe in him, through preaching, wherever they may have been*. [...] All those who have believed will be saved, even if they come from paganism, because *they have professed their faith down there* (sc. in hell): *God's punishments save and educate!* They exhort people to repent and want the sinner's repentance rather than his death⁴² [...] Even those who were outside the law but had lived in a righteous way, thanks to the particular quality of their soul, quickly converted and *believed, even if they*

⁴⁰ Eph 4:19.

⁴¹ See Mark Scott, "Guarding the Mysteries of Salvation: The Pastoral Pedagogy of Origen's Universalism," *J ECS* 18 (2010) 347–368. A systematic study will be developed in the framework of an investigation into the theological, ecclesiastical, social, and political reasons that brought about the rejection of the doctrine of *apokatastasis* in at least a part of the Christian tradition.

⁴² Ezek 18:23; 33:11.

happened to be imprisoned in hell [...] Thus, it is demonstrated for sure that God is good, and the Lord can save with impartial justice those who convert, *here or on the other side*; for God's active power arrives not only here on earth, but *everywhere, and it operates everywhere*,

even in hell. Those who convert, not on earth, but in hell, will be saved all the same. Clement greatly valued the salvific implications of Christ's descent to hell, just as Origen did. The latter considered the *Shepherd of Hermas*—in which Christ's descent to hell is presented as salvific—as *valde utilis et ... divinitus inspirata*.⁴³ This motif is rooted in 1 Pet 3:19, which indeed was commented on in Clement's *Hypotyposeis*.⁴⁴ The theme of Christ's salvific descent to hell is found in some early Christian writings that were initially considered to be revealed and divinely inspired, but were later rejected from the New Testament canon, such as the *Shepherd of Hermas* (*Sim.* 9, 16, 6) and the *Gospel of Peter*, in a scene (10, 41) that seems to belong to its most ancient layer, perhaps even dating back to the middle of the first century.⁴⁵ Among early Christian authors who insist on Christ's salvific *descensus ad inferos* are Justin (*Dial.* 72, 4), Origen (*Cels.* II 43; *Hom.* 2 *Sam.* 5), Ephrem,⁴⁶ and precisely Clement.

Thus, Clement too, like Origen after him, insists that divine providence is salvific, even though, at the same time, it respects the free will of each individual. In *Strom.* I 173, 1–6 Clement remarks that God's providence “provides for salvation,” and this in two ways: either through good deeds as a benefactor or through punishment *qua* sovereign, but punishments that are such as to have the punished person convert. *Tertium non datur*: no case is mentioned in which God's providence does not save, through either good deeds or punishment. And in Clement's view there is absolutely nothing that escapes the care of divine providence, whose aim is universal salvation, as is stated in *Protr.* 87, 6. An important confirmation comes from *Strom.* I 86, 1–2, in which Clement again uses therapeutic imagery: even evil acts of will by people who have detached themselves from God

⁴³ Origen, *Comm. Rom.* 10, 31.

⁴⁴ See also 1 Pet 4:6; Rom 10:7; Eph 4:9; Matt 27:52–53.

⁴⁵ *Evangelium Petri* 10, 39–42. The *Gospel of Peter* is identified by Beatrice with the Gospel written by Mark in Rome, different from the later, canonical *Gospel of Mark*, cf. Pier Franco Beatrice, “The ‘Gospel According to the Hebrews’ in the Apostolic Fathers,” *NT* 48 (2006) 147–195, esp. 149–151 and 194. Cf. Th. Kraus and T. Nicklas (eds.), *Das Evangelium nach Petrus* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), in which Crossan dates the *Gospel of Peter* to the 1st century (117–134), a dating also accepted as possible by Penner and VanderStichele (351). Edition Paul Foster, *The Gospel of Peter, Introduction, Critical Edition and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

⁴⁶ See Ilaria Ramelli, “La centralità del Mistero di Cristo nell'escatologia di s. Efrem,” *Augustinianum* 49 (2009) 371–406.

are directed by universal providence toward a salvific/healthy end, even if their cause would produce illness. But the main characteristic of divine providence is not to allow that the evil produced by a voluntary detachment from the Good remains useless, without any fruit, nor to allow that it becomes harmful. For it is typical of God's wisdom, virtue, and power not only to do the good—since this is, so to say, God's nature, just as the nature of fire is to warm and that of light is to illuminate—, but also, and above all, to produce, by means of the evils excogitated by some, a good and useful end, and to handle those which seem evils in such a way as to be helpful.

Origen will develop this train of thought up to his doctrine of the total eviction of evil in the end. In Clement's opinion, the world is a place of education, a veritable school (παιδευτήριον): "This exterior appearance has been thrown upon us because of the entrance into this world, that we might enter this place of education which is common to all of us. But inside, hidden, the Father dwells, and his Son, who died for us and rose together with us" (*Quis dives* 33, 6). Pedagogical metaphors, along with therapeutic ones, will be dear to Origen as well. This pedagogic and therapeutic point of view explains the reason why Clement ascribes to the 'otherworldly fire' (the πῦρ αἰώνιον) a purifying and educative function; this is also why it is wise and endowed with discernment: "The fire sanctifies, not the flesh of sacrificial offerings, but the sinners' souls, and I mean a fire that is not a fire that devours everything and tests, but the fire that is endowed with discernment (φρόνιμον), which spreads in the soul that passes through that fire" (*Strom.* VII 34, 4).

Clement's therapeutic and pedagogical mentality, joined with his notion—which will be shared by Origen—of a substantial continuity between the present and the future life, also explains how he constantly hopes that 'the heretics' can be converted by God, even after death, thanks to God's paternal care:

Two kinds of lessons are taught, which fit each of the two kinds of sins: what fits the first kind is the knowledge and clear demonstration of the testimony coming from Scriptures; what fits the second is the exercise according to reason, with instruction that comes from faith and fear. Both kinds contribute to the growth and the *ascent toward perfect love*. Indeed, I think that precisely for this reason the perfection and aim of the gnostic is double: one contemplative and scientific; the other practical.

May these heretics, too, after learning from these notes, return to wisdom and turn to the omnipotent God. But if, like deaf snakes, they should refuse to listen to the song that is sung now, all recently, but is extremely ancient, may they be *educated at least by God*, by bearing his paternal admonitions; may they be ashamed and repent, and may it not happen that, behaving with obstinate disobedience, they must undergo the final and general judgment.

For partial educative processes take place as well, which are called ‘*corrections*,’ which we, who belong to the people of the Lord, mostly encounter when we happen to be in a state of sin: we are corrected by divine providence just as children are by their teacher or father. *God does not punish* (τιμωρεῖται)—since punishment is the retribution of evil with further evil—but *corrects* (κολάζει) *for the sake of those who are corrected*, both in general and individually.⁴⁷

Clement is relying on Aristotle’s fundamental distinction between retributive τιμωρία and educative κόλασις, and surely also on the fact that the New Testament speaks exclusively of κόλασις/κολάζειν decided by God here or in the other world (the κόλασις αἰώνιος), and never of τιμωρία/τιμωρεῖσθαι. In Clement’s view, those things which are called punishments are rather educative actions or processes established by God, not as retributions for evils that have been perpetrated, but with a constructive and educative purpose, for the benefit of the sinner and of all. Christian believers are the first recipients of such instructive punishments; as for other people (‘heretics’ and non-Christians), Clement hopes that they may be educated in this world, during their earthly life, but if they should die without having converted, he is confident that God will educate them in the other world by means of paternal admonitions. In this way, the path to universal *apokatastasis* is open.

According to Floyd, Clement even suggested—like Origen after him—that demons themselves can repent, convert, and be saved (*Paed.* III 44–45).⁴⁸ The passage is also very interesting, to my mind, in that it concerns the πῦρ αἰώνιον that was sent by God the Logos against Sodom, and this fire is again called by Clement φρόνιμον or full of discernment. What is more, the punishment of Sodom is said by Clement to be for the human beings “the image of their wise, or well calculated, salvation,” τῆς εὐλογίστου τοῖς ἀνθρώποις σωτηρίας εἰκῶν. This means that salvation passes through

⁴⁷ *Strom.* VII 102, 1–3.

⁴⁸ William E.G. Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: University Press, 1971), 72 f. This is the Greek text: Οἱ Σοδομίται ὑπὸ πολλῆς τρυφῆς ἐξοκείλαντες εἰς ἀσέλγειαν ... ὁ παντεπόπτης λόγος ... καταφλεχθῆναι προσέταξε τὰ Σόδομα, ὀλίγον τι τοῦ φρονίμου πυρὸς ἐκείνου ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκολασίαν ἐκχέων ... Γέγονεν τοίνυν ἡ Σοδομιτῶν δικαία τιμωρία τῆς εὐλογίστου τοῖς ἀνθρώποις σωτηρίας εἰκῶν· οἱ γὰρ μὴ τὰ ὅμοια τοῖς κεκολασμένοις ἀμαρτήσαντες οὐ τὴν ὁμοίαν ποτὲ τοῖς ἀμαρτωλοῖς ὑπόσχοιεν δίκην τῷ μὴ ἀμαρτεῖν τὸ μὴ παθεῖν πεφυλαγμένοι ... ἀγγέλους τε τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχήν, ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον ἀγρίων ἀγγέλων τετήρηκεν. ... Τοὺς γὰρ μὴ δυνάμενους ἐξουσίαν υἱοθεσίας φέρειν ὁ φόβος μὴ ἐξυβρίζειν διατηρεῖ. Διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ αἱ κολάσεις καὶ αἱ ἀπειλαί, ἵνα δεισαντες τὰς δίκας τοῦ ἀμαρτάνειν ἀποσχώμεθα.

punishment if necessary, and that punishment in turn aims at salvation. Clement also adds that threats and punishments are wanted by God in order to inspire a salutary fear, which keeps human beings from sinning (διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ αἱ κολάσεις καὶ αἱ ἀπειλαί, ἵνα δείσαντες τὰς δίκας τοῦ ἀμαρτάνειν ἀποσχώμεθα).

Another core notion that Origen will find in Clement and that bears on the doctrine of *apokatastasis* is the distinction between sin and sinners. Sins must be destroyed in that they are evil, but sinners are nevertheless creatures of God, and all that God created is good. Along with the tenet of the ontological non-subsistence of evil, this concept will form one of the main metaphysical pillars of the theory of *apokatastasis* in Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Evagrius.⁴⁹

To love one's enemies does not mean to love evil, or impiety, or adultery, or theft, but the thief, the impious man, the adulterous man, and not in that he sins and with this or that action stains the name of 'human being,' but *in that he is a human being and a creature of God*. Of course, sinning is in the act, not in the being, and therefore it is not a work of God. Sinners are called 'the enemies of God' precisely because they have made themselves enemies of the commandments, which they have disobeyed, just as those who have obeyed them are called friends of God. Their denomination comes to the latter from familiarity with God, and to the former from alienation from God, and both familiarity and alienation depend on a free choice.⁵⁰

Concerning the 'enemies' of God, Clement, like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa afterwards, remembered that Paul in 1 Cor 15:25–28 foretells that all of these 'enemies' will submit to Christ in the end—and thereby will be saved, according to the equation between submission and salvation drawn by Origen and then Gregory of Nyssa⁵¹—, whereas the last enemy, death, which is no creature of God, unlike the other 'enemies,' will be utterly annihilated. At that point, the other 'enemies' will no longer be enemies, because they were not ontologically such, but only because of their past choice of evil, now repudiated in order to adhere to the Good, that is, God. Thus, Christ will be able to hand all these past enemies to God the Father, "that God may be all in all."

⁴⁹ On Evagrius in particular, see the commentary in the new edition of the *Kephalaia Gnostica* (Leiden/Atlanta: Brill/SBL, forthcoming).

⁵⁰ *Strom.* IV 93–94; see also *Strom.* I 4, 1.

⁵¹ On which see my "Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism. Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Biblical and Philosophical Basis of the Doctrine of Apokatastasis," *VChr* 61 (2007) 313–356.

Indeed, according to Clement, just as later according to Origen, the *telos* is all humans' *theosis* (*Protr.* 8, 4), based on Christ's 'inhumanation,' an idea that will be developed by Origen, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa. The main agent of salvific providence is Christ-Logos, who always "encourages, admonishes, saves" (*Protr.* 6, 2; see also 87, 6). Christ, who "has saved us while we were already close to ruin" (*Protr.* 7, 4), will bring about the universal harmonization of all beings (*Protr.* 5, 2).⁵² Clement is convinced, like Origen after him, that salvation must be freely chosen by each individual, but the Logos helps each to choose it by means of therapy, purification, and illumination; in this way, Christ becomes a 'sting of salvation.' Thus, the Logos waits for unbelievers to believe, even after death, because it is the Lord of all and the Saviour of all (*Strom.* VI 46 ff.; VII 7, 6), and "almost compels people to salvation for a superabundance of goodness" (*Strom.* VII 86, 6).

To be sure, Clement did not develop a consistent and thorough theory of *apokatastasis*, but what I have pointed out clearly paved the way to the theory of universal salvation. If Origen drew inspiration from Clement for his conception of *apokatastasis*, Clement and Origen seem to me to have been inspired by Philo and his notion of the restoration of the soul through a (philosophical) therapy, which I have illustrated beforehand, although Philo did not believe in universal salvation.⁵³ His therapeutic and medical imagery, too, will be dear to Clement and Origen as well.

Sachs seems to me to be right to suggest that Clement offered some inspiration to Origen for his doctrine of *apokatastasis*, thus agreeing with Daley and Müller, especially in that he considers the therapeutic light in which Clement saw divine punishments.⁵⁴ I have personally added many and hopefully forceful further arguments in this sense. Clement of Alexandria was a Christian Platonist⁵⁵ and was a presbyter in Alexandria, according to a letter of Alexander of Jerusalem reported by Eusebius: Alexander was directly acquainted with Clement; he wrote that letter from Alexandria and

⁵² See Francesco Trisoglio, "La salvezza in Clemente Alessandrino," in *Pagani e cristiani alla ricerca della salvezza*, 639–659.

⁵³ See my "Philosophical Allegoresis of Scripture in Philo and Its Legacy in Gregory of Nyssa," *The Studia Philonica Annual* 20 (2008) 55–99.

⁵⁴ Sachs, "Apocatastasis in Patristic Theology," section 1.

⁵⁵ See only Eric Osborn, "Clement and Platonism," in L. Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana octava* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 419–428; Henny F. Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginning of Christian Apophaticism* (Oxford: University Press, 2006); Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), ch. 2 and 6–11.

had Clement deliver it to the church in Antioch (*Hist. eccl.* VI 11, 6).⁵⁶ His relationship with Origen is uncertain: we do not know whether he was the teacher of Origen, who never cites him, even though he very probably knew him, his work, and his thought.⁵⁷ Indeed, when Origen must adduce examples of philosophers who were also Christians and even presbyters, in a letter (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* VI 19, 12–14), he cites Pantaenus, the teacher of Clement, and Heraclas, a presbyter in Alexandria who studied philosophy and wore a philosopher's attire even when he was a presbyter,⁵⁸ but not Clement, although he would have been an excellent and handy example of a philosopher-presbyter, all the more so if he had been his teacher. But Eusebius, who in *Hist. eccl.* VI 6, 1 infers simply from a chronological calculation that Origen must have been a pupil of Clement, is likely to have intended to draw an institutional succession, from Pantaenus to Clement to Origen. At any rate, Clement's thought provides important premises for the doctrine of *apokatastasis* that was then developed by Origen and that is also attested to by their contemporary, Bardaisan of Edessa.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ This provided that the Clement mentioned by Alexander in his letter was indeed our Clement.

⁵⁷ Clement is reported to have been the head of the catechetical school of Alexandria before Origen; it is difficult, however, to assess the institutional role of this school in this early time. Clement may have been a private teacher; in any case, if he was the head of the catechetical school, this was not the description of this school given by Eusebius, which applied to the later institution controlled by the monarchic bishop of Alexandria. See at least Roelof van der Broek, "The Christian School at Alexandria in the Second and Third Centuries," in J.W. Drijvers and A. MacDonald (eds.), *Centers of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 39–47; Clemens Scholten, "Die alexandrinische Katechetenschule," *JAC* 38 (1995) 16–37; Annewies van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical School' of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," *HTR* 90 (1997) 59–87; Alain Le Boulluec, "Aux origines, encore, de l'école d'Alexandrie," *Adamantius* 5 (1999) 8–36; Marco Rizzi, "Il *didaskalos* nella tradizione alessandrina," in G. Firpo and G. Zecchini (eds.), *Magister. Aspetti culturali e istituzionali* (Alessandria: Edizioni Dell'Orso, 1999), 177–198; idem, "Scuola di Alessandria," in A. Monaci Castagno (ed.), *Origene. Dizionario* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2000), 437–440; Emanuela Prinzivalli, "La metamorfosi della scuola alessandrina da Eracla a Didimo," in Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana octava*, 911–937; Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), with my review in *Adamantius* 14 (2008) 637–641; Jutta Tloka, *Griechische Christen, Christliche Griechen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) with my review in *Adamantius* 14 (2008) 641–645; Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, ch. 1. See also Attila Jakab, *Ecclesia Alexandrina* (Bern: Lang, 2004), 91–106.

⁵⁸ See my "Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianisation of Hellenism," *VChr* 63 (2009) 217–263.

⁵⁹ See Ramelli, "Origen, Bardaisan." I am very grateful to the organizers of the colloquium, and to the participants, especially Alain Le Boulluec and Lorenzo Perrone, for their helpful discussion and comments.

PART THREE

TRUTH

DEMONSTRATIVE METHOD IN
STROMATEIS VII: CONTEXT, PRINCIPLES, AND PURPOSE

Matyáš Havrda

At the beginning of his polemic against Celsus, Origen briefly responds to his opponent's comparison between the Greek and the barbarian attitude towards doctrines (δόγματα). According to Origen, Celsus praises the barbarians for their ability to invent doctrines, but claims that the Greeks are better equipped to examine and confirm them (κρίναι καὶ βεβαιώσασθαι).¹ Like Jewish and Christian apologists, and many Platonists of his time, Celsus believes that Greek philosophy depends on ancient wisdom in its doctrines; nevertheless, he points out that it has developed unprecedented methods of critical examination and scientific demonstration.² But Origen remains unimpressed. Referring to the Apostle's claim to speak with "a demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4), he retorts that "there is a kind of demonstration appropriate to the Logos, more divine than the Greek one derived from dialectic."³ Origen tells us a little more about this kind of demonstration in the opening lines of the fourth book of *De principiis*, where he notes that the greatness of the matters explored by Christian researchers does not allow them to rest content with common notions and the visual evidence, but, as Origen puts it, "in order to provide what appears to us as demonstration of our statements, we also take into account the testimonies of the Scriptures that we believe to be divine, the so-called Old and the New Testament."⁴ Here again, Origen indicates that Christian thinkers are equipped with a demonstrative method superior to the one derived from Greek dialectic. Whereas the principles of philosophical demonstration are limited to the common notions and the evidence of the senses, when it comes to things divine, the Christian researcher can also rely on testimonies he believes to be divine.⁵

¹ Origen, *Cels.* I 2.

² Cf. Horacio E. Lona, *Die 'Wahre Lehre' des Kelsos* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2005), 74f.

³ Origen, *Cels.* I 2: ἔστι τις οἰκεία ἀπόδειξις τοῦ λόγου, θειοτέρα παρὰ τὴν ἀπὸ διαλεκτικῆς ἐλληνικῆν.

⁴ Origen, *Princ.* IV 1,1.

⁵ Cf. Lorenzo Perrone, "L'argomentazione di Origene nel trattato di ermeneutica bib-

The description of the arguments based on the Scriptures as a superior analogy to the demonstrative arguments used in Greek philosophy was not invented by Origen, nor is it unique in Christian apologetic literature. The earliest evidence of this *topos* seems to come from the treatise *On Resurrection*, ascribed to Justin Martyr, a text whose author and date are disputed, but which according to prevailing opinion was written no later than in the seventh decade of the second century.⁶ At the beginning of the treatise its author explains, by way of a methodological programme, the practice of demonstration from the Scriptures in terms of concepts derived from Greek epistemological debates about the criterion of truth and the method of scientific proof.⁷

In a way that resembles Pseudo-Justin's treatise to some extent, but surpasses it both in extension and subtlety, the analogy is also exploited in the writings of Clement of Alexandria.⁸ Throughout the *Stromateis*, Clement pays considerable attention to Greek epistemology and the problem of proof, in particular, plays an important role in his intellectual project as outlined in that work. It is crucial in his attempt to defend the standpoint of Christian faith against Greek intellectuals; it is vital in his endeavour to explain, both to the Greeks and to the simple-minded Christians, the interdependence between faith and knowledge and to develop the idea of Christian gnosis itself; and it plays an important part in Clement's polemic against 'heresies.' The significance of the demonstrative method in Clement's thought is highlighted by the fact that the theory of demonstration is a central topic in the so-called eighth book of his *Stromateis*.⁹ What-

lica. Note di lettura su Peri archôn IV 1–3," *Studi classici e orientali* 40 (1990) 161–203, here esp. 178.

⁶ Cf. Martin Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung: Text und Studie* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2001), 95f., 193–198, 221–224; Alberto D'Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino, Sulla resurrezione. Discorso cristiano del II secolo* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2001), 277–287. For the history of the debate cf. Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin*, 11–21; D'Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino*, 91–100. Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin*, 203–221, argues that the treatise was written by Athenagoras; Heimgartner's arguments are criticized by Alice Whealey, "Pseudo-Justin's *De Resurrectione*: Athenagoras or Hippolytus?," *VChr* 60 (2006) 420–430, who herself ascribes the treatise to Hippolytus or "someone from the same circle" (430). With Whealey's datation, of course, the relative chronology of *De resurrectione* and Clement would be reversed.

⁷ *De resurrectione* 1, 1–11; Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin*, 104, 134–138; cf. D'Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino*, 179–223.

⁸ Cf. Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin*, 83–86.

⁹ Cf. Silke-Petra Bergjan, "Logic and Theology in Clement of Alexandria. The Purpose of the 8th Book of the *Stromata*," *ZAC* 12 (2008) 396–413; Matyáš Havrda, "Galenus Christianus? The Doctrine of Demonstration in *Stromata* VIII and the Question of Its Source," *VChr* 65 (2011) 343–375.

ever the origin and purpose of this mysterious text, it shows that Clement was occupied with a philosophical source dealing with the method of proof as scientific argument based on agreed and evident premises. Numerous verbal parallels between the eighth book and other books of the *Stromateis* suggest that Clement used either the text of the eighth book or its source throughout his work.¹⁰

The aim of this paper is to explore Clement's use of the demonstrative method in various contexts of the *Stromateis*, with a special focus on the seventh book. Leaving aside the material in the eighth book which seems to reflect Clement's theological goals to a limited extent only, we will ask how Clement employs the terms and methods derived from his philosophical sources, and for what purpose he does so.¹¹

1. FAITH ON TRIAL

In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the seventh book of the *Stromateis* Clement presents an outline of the Christian theory of demonstration. He does so in response to objections raised by critics of the Christian faith, vaguely described as the Greeks and the Jews. According to Clement, these critics claim that the truth of the Christian faith is undermined by the disagreement among various schools (αἱρέσεις) of Christian doctrine. Regrettably, Clement does not specify his opponents more exactly. Nonetheless he makes it clear that the argument from 'disagreement' (διαφωνία) is merely one among several 'difficulties' (ἀπορίαι) put forward against the Christian faith by these critics. He describes the ensuing treatment of the διαφωνία argument as a preliminary, "cleansing" phase of the polemic, in which obstacles are removed, so that we might be ready for the solution of the other 'difficulties' as we proceed to the next *Stromateus*.¹²

We do not know what the other objections of Clement's opponents are, but we can make a reasonable guess about at least some of them. When referring to the upcoming solutions of these problems, Clement follows a

¹⁰ Cf. Christiane von Wedel, *Symbola ad Clementis Alexandrini stromatum librum VIII. interpretandum* (Diss., Berlin: Wagner, 1905), 44 f.; Wilhelm Ernst, *De Clementis Alexandrini Stromatum libro VIII. qui fertur* (Diss., Göttingen: Hubert, 1910), *passim*; Pierre Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates* et les *Hypotyposes* de Clément d'Alexandrie," *VChr* 30 (1976) 268–302, here 276–278.

¹¹ Clement's writings are quoted according to the latest GCS editions (ed. O. Stählin, L. Früchtel and U. Treu); *Stromata* I–VI: *Clemens Alexandrinus II* (GCS 52; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 41985); *Stromata* VII: *Clemens Alexandrinus II* (GCS 17; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 21970).

¹² *Strom.* VII 89, 1.

plan announced in the opening paragraph of book six, where, after outlining the contents of the sixth and the seventh books, he promises to solve some difficulties “concerning the advent of the Lord” (περὶ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου παρουσίας), put forward by the Greeks and the ‘barbarians.’¹³ Now the difficulties concerning the advent of the Lord may plausibly be interpreted as objections against the part of Christian confession which proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God who came and suffered in a human body for the salvation of humankind.¹⁴ In the first book of the *Stromateis* Clement tells us a little more about these objections. His starting point is a well-known passage in the *First Letter to the Corinthians*: “For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.”¹⁵ According to Clement’s interpretation, the difference between the Jews and the Greeks in this passage is as follows: the Jews are acquainted with prophesy concerning the advent of the Saviour, but they are not convinced about its fulfilment. For the Greeks the belief that the Son of God speaks through a human being, indeed that God has a son, and that the son has even suffered, is little more than a myth. While the Jews demand signs in order to believe, explains Clement, the Greeks look for “the so-called necessary arguments and other syllogisms”; that is to say, they need logical proofs or at least convincing arguments.¹⁶

2. FAITH AND DEMONSTRATION

The demand of the Greeks in particular gleams through several passages of the *Stromateis* and seems to largely determine the way Clement treats the problems of faith and demonstration. Throughout his work, Clement’s attitude towards demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) is ambiguous. On the one hand, Clement concedes that the standpoint of faith, as expressed in the confession formula, cannot be proved by demonstrative argument, at least not in the sense in which the word is normally used in Greek logic. He censures his opponents for demanding proof in matters of faith, mocking them as

¹³ *Strom.* VI 1, 4.

¹⁴ Cf. *Strom.* V 1, 1, where Clement alludes to the part of the baptismal confession formula concerning the Son; cf. Alain Le Boulluec, in Clément d’Alexandrie, *Stromate V, Tome II (commentaire)* (SC 279; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1981), 11; Matyáš Havrda, “Some Observations on Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, book five,” *VChr* 64 (2010) 1–30, here 4 n. 9. For the polemical context of the allusion cf. *ibid.* 3 n. 5.

¹⁵ 1 Cor 1:22–23 (NRSV, modified), quoted in *Strom.* I 88, 4.

¹⁶ *Strom.* I 88, 4–5; cf. VI 127, 1.

“common people” who “are not satisfied with mere salvation by faith, but require proof as a pledge of truth.”¹⁷ He recalls Paul’s warning that faith should not rest on “human wisdom” but on “the power of God,” which, as Clement explains, is the only thing that can save us “even without proofs, through mere faith” (καὶ ἄνευ τῶν ἀποδείξεων διὰ ψιλῆς τῆς πίστεως).¹⁸ Again, he makes it clear that it would be absurd (ἄτοπον) for the Christians not to believe their trustworthy teacher, God the Saviour, and to ask him for proofs of his words.¹⁹ But the standpoint of faith, according to Clement, is precisely this: believing what the Saviour, that is, the Logos become flesh, tells us about himself, as well as about his Father.²⁰

On the other hand, while admitting that faith is a “voluntary assent prior to demonstration” (ἐκούσιος πρὸ ἀποδείξεως συγκατάθεσις), Clement hesitates to call it ‘supposition’ (ὑπόληψις),²¹ at least in the sense of a ‘weak supposition’ (ἀσθενὴς ὑπόληψις), which, as Clement puts it, differs from faith in the same way as a flatterer from a friend and a wolf from a dog.²² The reason why faith is not ‘weak’ in this sense is given by Clement’s testimony that it is an assent to “something forceful” (ἰσχυρῶ τι), namely to God himself. “Indeed, who could be more powerful than God?” asks Clement, implying even that it is hard to find a position as solidly grounded as the assent of faith.²³

And here lies the ambiguity of Clement’s concept of proof. Despite conceding that faith cannot be proved in terms of Greek logic, and even chastising his opponents for making such a demand, Clement nevertheless attempts to show that the standpoint of faith is logically sound, and even that it has the force of a scientific demonstration. Arguments to this effect are sketched and scattered throughout the *Stromateis*, as it suits the genre of the book. But when all the pieces are taken together, the main points may be reconstructed as follows.

¹⁷ *Strom.* V 18, 3.

¹⁸ *Strom.* V 9, 2.

¹⁹ *Strom.* II 24, 3.

²⁰ Cf. *Strom.* V 1, 1–5.

²¹ *Strom.* II 27, 4. Cf. 28, 1.

²² *Strom.* II 16, 1.

²³ Cf. *Strom.* II 28, 1.

3. PRINCIPLES OF DEMONSTRATION

First of all, Clement argues that the truth claims of Greek philosophers rest upon premises that are also accepted on faith, prior to demonstration. Thus, in order to explain the distinction between faith and mere supposition (ὑπόληψις), Clement asks rhetorically: “If believing (πιστεύειν) were the same thing as supposing (ὑπολαμβάνειν), how could the philosophers hold their claims to be certain (βέβαια)?”²⁴ His aim is probably to convey the message to his opponents that to ask for demonstration in matters of faith makes as little sense as to demand proof of the first premises of the assertions that the philosophers themselves hold to be true. Clement repeatedly reminds his readers of the Aristotelian dictum according to which the principles of demonstration are beyond proof: “If someone objects that scientific knowledge is a demonstrative knowledge with an argument,” says Clement, “we shall respond that in this case, too, the principles are indemonstrable.”²⁵

What sort of indemonstrable principles does Clement have in mind when speaking about Greek philosophy? In the second book of the *Stromateis* Clement quotes Theophrastus as saying that sensory perception is the starting point of belief, as “it is from sense perception that the reason in us and our thinking draws its starting points.”²⁶ Elsewhere Clement says that knowledge consists of sense perception and intellectual apprehension, evidence being common to both. While describing sense perception as the threshold of knowledge, at the same time he identifies the principle of the world, namely the first cause, as an indemonstrable principle, complaining that neither the early Greek physicists with their material ἀρχαί nor Anaxagoras with his inactive intellect got it right.²⁷ So for Clement the ‘indemonstrable principles,’ apart from phenomena evident to the senses, include those evident to the intellect, an example of which is the notion of the first cause. In the fifth book of the *Stromateis*, Clement illustrates his point about faith by delineating the limits of scientific research and providing different types of propositions that cannot be examined and can only be accepted on faith.²⁸

²⁴ *Strom.* II 27, 4.

²⁵ *Strom.* II 13, 4: εἰ δέ τις λέγοι τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἀποδεικτικὴν εἶναι μετὰ λόγου, ἀκουσάτω ὅτι καὶ αἱ ἀρχαὶ ἀναπόδεικτοι. Cf. *Strom.* II 14, 3; VII 95, 6; VIII 7, 1–2; 8, 6.

²⁶ *Strom.* II 9, 5: Θεόφραστος δὲ τὴν αἴσθησιν ἀρχὴν εἶναι πιστεῶς φησιν· ἀπὸ γὰρ ταύτης αἱ ἀρχαὶ πρὸς τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐκτείνονται.

²⁷ *Strom.* II 13, 2–14, 2.

²⁸ *Strom.* V 5, 3–4.

In this connection, he seems to refer to the first principles of proof when he says that

some research questions demand sense perception, for example when one inquires whether the fire is hot or the snow white, others, as Aristotle puts it, admonition and rebuke, like in the case of the inquiry whether one should respect one's parents. And there are questions deserving even punishment, as when someone asks for proofs that there is providence.²⁹

Thus Clement understands the belief that there is providence as an indisputable postulate, and though he does not explicitly call it evident, nevertheless he regards providence as "clearly apparent" (φανερὰς οὐσης, scil. τῆς θείας προνοίας) and "graspable even to those who do not confess" (οὐδὲ τοῖς μὴ ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀκατανόητος), that is to say, to the pagans and the Jews.³⁰

The example of providence (as well as the ethical postulate mentioned in the same passage) indicates that, in Clement's view, the principles of demonstration include some commonly shared notions. As a religious thinker, Clement is mainly interested in the notion of the divine. In the fifth book of the *Stromateis*, he uses the Hellenistic term πρόληψις ('anticipation') to describe the notion of God as the ruler of the world, as it is shared by all nations from all parts of the world.³¹ In a similar context Clement speaks of a "natural reflection of the divine" (θεοῦ ἔμφασις φυσική) that has always been with those who "thought properly" (τοῖς εὖ φρονοῦσι).³² He also describes it as "the notion of God" (θεία ἐννοία), linking it with the story in Genesis 2:7 of the divine breath (ἐμφυσήμα) breathed by God into the human face, a story which, as Clement explains, refers to the origin of the rational soul.³³ Thus the notion of God as the ruler of the world (in other words,

²⁹ *Strom.* V 6, 1: πάλιν τῶν ζητημάτων ἃ μὲν αἰσθήσεως δεῖται, οἷον ἐὰν ζητῇ τις, εἰ τὸ πῦρ θερμὸν ἢ ἡ χιών λευκή· τινὰ δὲ νουθεσίας καὶ ἐπιπλήξεως, ὡς φησιν Ἀριστοτέλης, ὡς τὸ ἐρώτημα ἐκεῖνο, εἰ χρὴ γονεῖς τιμᾶν. ἔστιν δὲ ἃ καὶ κολάσεως ἄξια, ὁποῖόν ἐστι τὸ αἰτεῖν ἀποδείξεις, εἰ πρόνοιᾳ ἐστι.

³⁰ *Strom.* V 6, 2–3; cf. Rom 1:20. For the philosophical background of Clement's argument cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* II 4 (trans. H. Rackham): "For when we gaze upward to the sky and contemplate the heavenly bodies, what can be so obvious and so manifest (*tam apertum tamque perspicuum*) as that there must exist some power possessing transcendent intelligence by whom these things are ruled?"; cf. Woldemar Görler, "Les 'évidences' dans la philosophie hellénistique," in C. Lévy and L. Pernot (eds.), *Dire l'évidence (Philosophie et rhétorique antiques)* (Paris: L' Harmattan, 1997), 131–143, here 134 f.

³¹ *Strom.* V 133, 9.

³² *Strom.* V 87, 1.

³³ *Strom.* V 87, 4; cf. 94, 3–4. For the interpretation of Gen 2:7 cf. Philo of Alexandria, *Opif.* 139. Cf. also Clement, *Paed.* I 7, 1–8, 1. In *Paed.* I 63, 1 Clement describes man as a "religious animal" (φιλόθεον ζῶον).

the notion of providence) is a common notion of the rational soul. As such Clement acknowledges it as an indemonstrable principle. In this way, he makes common ground with those philosophers of his time who share the idea of divine providence, however critical they might be of other aspects of the Christian faith. When pointing out that the principles upon which they base their assertions are as indemonstrable as the standpoint of faith, apparently Clement does not wish to undermine their arguments, but rather to persuade them that the standpoint of the Christian faith is as rational as theirs.³⁴

4. FAITH AS PRINCIPLE

In order to reach this goal, Clement makes two ingenious steps, or rather one step that may be described from two perspectives: (a) he widens the concept of providence in such a way as to include the workings of divine goodness as revealed in the Scriptures and the tradition of the church (in other words he interprets divine πρόνοια in terms of divine οἰκονομία); (b) he replaces the common notion of God in its role of an indemonstrable principle with the concept of common faith (κοινή πίστις), which corresponds to the confession formula of the Christian community. Having asserted, in the above-mentioned passage, that it is inappropriate to demand proofs that providence exists, Clement draws the following conclusion: "But if providence exists, it is unholy to assume that all the prophesy and the dispensation concerning the Saviour did not take place according to providence. It is perhaps not even necessary to try to demonstrate these things."³⁵ For Clement, the postulate that the world is governed by providence leads us to believe that the biblical prophecies and the advent of the Saviour correspond to the divine will. This belief, Clement argues, is simply as obvious as the idea of providence itself, and need not be proved.³⁶ As a matter of course, it is not shared by all nations in the world: it is only accepted by those individuals who have come to know what is said by the Scriptures and the tradition of the church and who recognize it as the 'voice' of

³⁴ Cf. Le Boulluec, SC 279, 39.

³⁵ *Strom.* V 6, 2: προνοίας τοίνυν οὔσης, μὴ κατὰ πρόνοιαν γεγονέναι πᾶσαν τὴν τε προφητείαν καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸν σωτῆρα οἰκονομίαν ἡγείσθαι ἀνόσιον, καὶ ἴσως οὐδὲ χρὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα πειράσθαι ἀποδεικνύειν κτλ.

³⁶ For the concept of ἐνάργεια in Clement's thought cf. Raoul Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 227–229.

God.³⁷ Since the God who ‘speaks’ here is the divine Logos, the very same Logos that governs the world, faith in the Scriptures and the Christian tradition does not exclude the common ‘notion of God,’ but rather expands it. As mentioned above, Clement describes the content of this expanded belief as ‘the common faith’ and seems to identify it with the baptismal confession formula.³⁸

Thus the notion of providence helps Clement to overcome the charge that the belief about Jesus as the Son of God is a myth: as he notes in the first book of the *Stromateis*, the dispensation concerning the Saviour only appears as a myth to those who separate it from providence.³⁹ In addition, it enables Clement to present the standpoint of faith as an indemonstrable principle of proof. This point is developed especially in the second book of the *Stromateis*. Here Clement elaborates the Christian concept of faith, defending it against some “Greeks” who discard faith (πίστιν) as “empty and barbaric” (κενὴν καὶ βάρβαρον).⁴⁰ This charge of the Greek opponents is not directed against ‘believing’ in general, but rather against a specific kind of belief associated with “the barbarians,” and one that is considered “empty,” i.e. unfounded. We do not know whose charge Clement cites, but it might have been raised against Christians by the same critics who denounce the belief about Jesus as a myth.⁴¹ In a celebrated passage of the second book, Clement retorts that faith is a sort of “anticipation” (πρόληψις), not in the sense of a common notion of the divine, but rather in the sense of a voluntary “intention” (ἐπιβολή) of the mind, whose aim is to grasp the meaning of divine communication.⁴² This concept of faith implies the belief that it is God who speaks, a belief Clement refers to when describing faith

³⁷ Cf. *Strom.* II 9, 6. According to Clement, people may be hindered from recognizing the truth by “imitating mere appearance,” in consequence of which they “falsify their anticipation”; cf. *Strom.* VI 150, 1: ὁ μιμούμενος ἄρα τὴν δόκῃσιν δολοὶ καὶ τὴν πρόληψιν. In this sense Clement also uses the Platonic concept of unexamined opinions as ‘obstacles’ (τὰ ἐμποδῶν) that prevent the soul from grasping reality (cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 65a9–67b2; Pseudo-Plato, *Sisyphus* 389b6–c1; Clement, *Protr.* 114, 1; *Strom.* V 11, 4; VII 82, 5). Cf. also Plutarch, *Quaest. plat.* 1000a1–2.

³⁸ Cf. references above, note 14.

³⁹ Cf. *Strom.* I 52, 2: ἡ γὰρ κατὰ τὴν θεῖαν παράδοσιν φιλοσοφία ἵστησι τὴν πρόνοιαν καὶ βεβαιοῖ, ἥς ἀναμφεθείσης μῦθος ἡ περὶ τὸν σωτῆρα οἰκονομία φαίνεται κτλ.

⁴⁰ *Strom.* I 9, 1.

⁴¹ Cf. Celsus’ assessment of the barbarian attitude towards doctrines in Origen, *Cels.* I 2, quoted at the beginning of this paper. For the possibility that Clement could be responding to Celsus’ critique in some parts of the *Stromateis*, cf. Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque, II^e–III^e siècles*, vol. II (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1985), 364 f.

⁴² *Strom.* II 8, 4; 16, 3–17, 3.

as “the assent of piety” (θεοσεβείας συγκατάθεσις).⁴³ This ‘assent’ creates the difference between the common notion of God and the Christian faith, insofar as it takes the Scriptures and the tradition of the church as God’s voice. Throughout the *Stromateis*, Clement tries to convince his readers that such faith has the force of a demonstration whose first principle is God’s voice, or even that faith itself is the first principle that does not need to be proved or “fortified” by anything else.⁴⁴ Clement does not hesitate to call this sort of demonstration “scientific,” describing those who are able to argue on the basis of the Scriptures and the Christian tradition as scientists, or ‘gnostics.’⁴⁵

5. DEMONSTRATION IN *STROMATEIS* VII

The foregoing outline of Clement’s theory of demonstration is based mainly on the second and the fifth books of the *Stromateis*, where Clement uses the theory in order to explain the Christian concepts of faith and knowledge. From the point of view of these “virtues,” as Clement calls them, the Stromatist already seems to address some of the ‘difficulties’ raised by the Greeks and the Jews with which he planned to deal more fully after the end

⁴³ *Strom.* II 8, 4. For Clement’s definitions of faith cf. esp. Laura Rizzerio, “Considerazioni sulla nozione di ‘Fede’ in Clemente Alessandrino: un esempio di sintesi tra cultura classica e pensiero cristiano (*Str.* II 8,4–9,7),” *Sandalion* 8–9 (1985–1986) 147–179; Josef Lössl, “Der Glaubensbegriff des Klemens von Alexandrien im Kontext der hellenistischen Philosophie,” *ThPh* 77 (2002) 321–337; Eric Osborn, “Arguments for Faith,” in idem, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 182–196; Dragoș A. Giulea, “Apprehending ‘Demonstrations’ from the First Principle: Clement of Alexandria’s Phenomenology of Faith,” *The Journal of Religion* 89 (2009) 187–213.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Strom.* II 9,6: οὐκέτ’ οὖν πίστις γίνεται δι’ ἀποδείξεως ὡχυρωμένη. For the meaning of this passage cf. Ulrich Schneider, *Theologie als christliche Philosophie. Zur Bedeutung der biblischen Botschaft im Denken des Clemens von Alexandria* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999), 282–291. It may be noted that Clement does not always distinguish terminologically between demonstrative argument and its first principles, nor does he make a clear distinction between faith and the ‘voice of God’ in their role as the first principles of proof. Cf. *Strom.* II 25, 3: οὐδέπω συνίμεν ἀπόδειξιν εἶναι τὸ ῥήμα κυρίου; *Strom.* VI 70, 2: γίνεται τοίνυν αὕτη ἡ πίστις ἀπόδειξις βεβαία, ἐπεὶ τοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ παραδοθεῖσιν ἀλήθειαι ἔπεται. Observing that Clement sometimes refers to a principle of demonstration (e.g. ‘the voice of God’ in *Strom.* II 9, 6) as ἀπόδειξις, Guilea contends that in these cases the word is used in the sense of ‘manifestation’ or ‘phenomenon’ (“Apprehending ‘Demonstrations,’” 198–202). However, the point of describing ‘the voice of God’ as ἀπόδειξις is not to highlight the implication that it is revealed by God, nor even that it is self-evident, but rather to indicate that it proves something.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Strom.* I 98, 4; II 48–49; VI 91, 5; VII 52; 102, 1–2; 103, 4–5; 104, 1–2.

of the 'ethical part' of his project. In the last part of the seventh book the theory of demonstration comes into play again in Clement's argument, to serve a slightly different purpose than in the preceding *Stromateis*. This time the standpoint of faith is challenged on account of the variety of opinions about Christian doctrine and their mutual disagreement.⁴⁶ Where is the truth, ask the critics, implying that the conflicting truth claims about the same thing invalidate one another.⁴⁷

This, of course, is a version of the sceptical argument from disagreement.⁴⁸ Its aim is to undermine the standpoint of faith insofar as it is disputed among the Christians themselves. As presented by Clement, the sceptical challenge leads to the practical conclusion that "we should not believe" (μὴ δεῖν πιστεύειν [scil. ἡμᾶς]).⁴⁹ Clement retorts that the existence of different schools in Greek philosophy or Jewish religion does not discourage the adherents of these traditions from practising philosophy or Judaism.⁵⁰ Remaining on the level of practical arguments, Clement further compares an adept in the Christian faith with an ailing person in need of therapy. The fact that there are conflicting opinions among doctors and different medical schools will hardly divert such a person from visiting a doctor. In a similar vein, Clement argues, someone full of idols and ailing in soul will not fail to turn towards God in order to be healed, just because there are different schools of Christian doctrine.⁵¹

Thus Clement does not dispute the διαφωνία argument on the theoretical level (he does not question the claim that conflicting opinions invalidate one another), but merely contests its effectivity in showing that "we should not believe." Instead, according to Clement, the existence of different opinions compels those who are searching for the truth to do so more carefully and those who already believe to transform their faith into something more than mere opinion, namely into demonstrative knowledge.⁵²

⁴⁶ Cf. *Strom.* VII 89, 1. In this passage the Christian doctrine is described as ἡ ἀληθῆς διδασκαλία, insofar as we follow Stählin who reads ἀληθῆ instead of the ms. ἄλλην. For the concept of 'true doctrine' cf. *Strom.* V 85, 3; VI 124, 3; 147, 2 (?); VII 11, 3. The ms. reading is defended by Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 362 n. 4; cf. also SC 428, 272,4 and note 2.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Strom.* VII 89, 2; cf. Eric Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), 113; Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 363.

⁴⁸ Cf. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 365f., 370 and n. 26.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 89, 2. For the practical aspect of the 'sceptical' challenge cf. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 363.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Strom.* VII 89, 3; cf. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 366.

⁵¹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 90, 3–4; cf. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 370f.

⁵² Quoting a dictum that "heresies are for the approved" (Agraphon 75 Resch; cf. 1Cor 11:19), Clement explains that, because of heresies, those who are turning towards faith

For the benefit of both the intelligent student and the advanced believer, Clement then outlines the principles of demonstrative argument. To start with, Clement takes it as a consensual view that demonstration exists: "It is agreed by everyone," he says, "except for those who deny [the evidence of] the senses."⁵³ But if demonstration exists, argues Clement, it follows that "we must undertake the task of searching and learn demonstratively, directly from the Scriptures, that the heresies went astray and that the most exact knowledge and really the best school of thought is found only in the Truth [i.e., Christ] and the ancient church."⁵⁴ This transition from the possibility of demonstration based on sensory evidence to a demonstration of a particular claim based on the Scriptures is puzzling and illuminating at the same time. It indicates that when speaking about sensory experience as the starting point of proof, Clement specifically means the experience of hearing or reading the Scriptures.⁵⁵ This reasoning can only make sense within the context of an exegetic discussion, a discussion in which all the parties involved, whether they know it or not, take the Scriptures as the starting point of their assertions. And this is indeed the context in which Clement develops the theory of demonstration in the seventh book: he responds to the charge of disagreement among schools of Christian doctrine

approach the teaching of the Lord "more selectively" (ἐκλεκτικώτερον), that is to say, more critically (*Strom.* VII 90, 5). Here Clement probably refers to educated catechumens who are prone to be led towards faith by rational arguments, calling such pupils 'approved,' as they can give an account of what they believe and why. In the first book of the *Stromateis*, Clement seems to have in mind a similar group when he speaks about students who "reap the harvest of faith by demonstration" (I 28, 1). Alternatively, Clement links the expression 'approved' in the above-mentioned dictum to people who have already become approved in faith as far as both their way of life and their knowledge are concerned (VII 90, 5). By this interpretation he probably indicates that heresies help advanced believers to clarify their ethical and theoretical standpoints, thus contributing to what Clement describes as the twofold goal of the gnostic, namely to the attainment of rational discipline and scientific (i.e. demonstrative) knowledge; cf. *Strom.* VII 102, 1–2. For the whole passage cf. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 371–373. It may be noted that Origen, *Cels.* III 13, 4 f., quotes 1 Cor 11:19 in a similar connection.

⁵³ *Strom.* VII 92, 2.

⁵⁴ *Strom.* VII 92, 3.

⁵⁵ This observation helps us explain a curious transition Clement makes in his discussion on faith in *Strom.* II 9, 5–6. After recalling that Theophrastus regards sense perception as the principle of belief, since, as Theophrastus puts it, "it is from sense perception that the reason in us and our thinking draws its principles," Clement continues by saying: "Indeed, those who have come to believe the divine Scriptures have a secure judgement, taking the voice of God, who has given the Scriptures to us, as an irrefutable proof." Here Clement specifies the sense perception of which Theophrastus speaks as the perception of the divine voice, which in turn amounts to hearing or reading the Scriptures. Cf. Giulea, "Apprehending 'Demonstrations,'" 200–202.

by developing a method of convincing (“demonstrative”) interpretation of the Scriptures.

The crucial task of this project, of course, is to identify the criteria upon which the distinction between good and bad interpretations may be based. Clement dedicates several paragraphs of the seventh book to this problem.⁵⁶ He starts by separating two kinds of criteria: some are common to all human beings, for example the organs of sense, others are “technical criteria of true and false statements, reached by means of intellect and reasoning.”⁵⁷ Now the first group corresponds to what is sometimes called the ‘natural criteria’ in Greek epistemological discussions, as opposed to ‘technical criteria,’ such as a measuring rod (καλῶν) or a carpenter’s rule (διαβήτης).⁵⁸ Galen, who also knows the distinction between the two kinds of criteria, points out that the technical criteria are always developed by means of the natural ones, which, apart from the organs of sense in their natural state, include, as he puts it, “judgement or thought or whatever you want to call it.”⁵⁹ Although Clement only mentions the organs of sense among the natural criteria, he probably includes some kind of thinking or judging faculty among their number as well. He says, for example, that “all human beings have the same power of judgement (τὴν αὐτὴν κρίσιν), but some produce their proofs by following the choice of reason (τῷ αἰρουμένῳ λόγῳ), while others have given themselves up to pleasures and violate the Scriptures so as to suit their desires.”⁶⁰ It seems, then, that in Clement’s view the power of judgement is a natural (or ‘common’) criterion, which safeguards the correct interpretation of the Scriptures insofar as it follows the choice of reason.

But this is not an easy demand. Clement points out that those who attempt at the greatest things (such as the discovery of the truth) necessarily make the gravest mistakes, “unless they receive the rule of truth from the Truth itself.”⁶¹ Here Clement explains what he means by the choice of reason: in order to employ the power of judgement correctly, one needs to follow yet another criterion, namely ‘the rule of truth.’ This rule arguably corresponds to what Clement earlier describes as the ‘technical’ criterion,

⁵⁶ Cf. the commentary of Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 391–416.

⁵⁷ *Strom.* VII 93, 2: ἔστι μὲν οὖν κοινὰ τινὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κριτήρια καθάπερ τὰ αἰσθητήρια, τὰ δ' ἄλλα τῶν βουλευθέντων καὶ ἀσκησάντων τὰ ἀληθῆ, τὰ διὰ νοῦ καὶ λογισμοῦ τεχνικὰ λόγων ἀληθῶν τε καὶ ψευδῶν.

⁵⁸ Cf. Sextus, *Pyr.* II 15; *Math.* VII 31–32.

⁵⁹ Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* IX 1, 13 (De Lacy): τὴν γνώμην ἢ ἐννοίαν ἢ ὅ τι ποτ' ἐν ἐθέλῃ τις ὀνομάζειν.

⁶⁰ *Strom.* VII 94, 4; cf. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 395f.

⁶¹ *Strom.* VII 94, 5: ἢν μὴ τὸν κανόνα τῆς ἀληθείας παρ' αὐτῆς λαβόντες ἔχωσι τῆς ἀληθείας.

perhaps in order to emphasize its externality or difference from the natural criteria of knowledge. The choice the reason makes in order to provide guidance to the faculty of judgement probably includes the choice of this particular criterion called 'the rule of truth.'

Now we know approximately what Clement means by 'the rule of truth.' Also calling it "the rule of our tradition" or "the ecclesiastical rule," Clement defines it as "the concord and harmony between the Law and the Prophets on the one hand, and the Testament transmitted by the advent of the Lord, on the other."⁶² In other words, 'the rule of truth' is the principle of continuity between the Old Testament and the Christian tradition. Though it is not identical with the standpoint of 'common faith,' Clement seems to understand it as its obvious implication. Since, in Clement's view, the content of common faith comes from the Lord himself,⁶³ it is easy to gather why Clement regards 'the rule of truth' as a criterion given to the believers by "the Truth itself."

The idea of the 'choosing reason' guiding the natural criteria of truth brings us back to Clement's discussion of faith as 'voluntary anticipation' or 'the assent of piety.' It appears that the 'choice of reason' amounts to the act by which the mind of the believer accepts the standpoint of 'common faith' and its hermeneutical implication called 'the rule of truth.' But insofar as we accept the rule of truth from the Truth itself (in other words, if we believe as the tradition of the church teaches us to believe), we no longer depend on mere opinions, argues Clement, but there is a chance for us to confirm our findings about the doctrine of the Lord by the 'voice' of the Lord himself.⁶⁴ By means of faith we embrace a principle that cannot be put on a par with any other principle of investigation, since it is conceived as the first principle of everything: it is the Lord as revealed by his 'voice.'⁶⁵ At the same time, faith provides us with criteria of truth that enable us to escape the objection from *διαφωνία*, for the simple reason that they are produced by the matter being investigated itself.⁶⁶ The judgement of the believers is firm and their proofs irrefutable, says Clement, as long as they are based on the Scriptures.⁶⁷ While

⁶² *Strom.* VI 125, 3: κανὼν δὲ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς ἡ συνῶδια καὶ ἡ συμφωνία νόμου τε καὶ προφητῶν τῇ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου παρουσίαν παραδιδόμενη διαθήκη. Cf. also *Strom.* I 15, 2; 96, 1; IV 3, 2; V 1, 4; VI 131, 1; 165, 1; VII 41, 3; 90, 2; 105, 5.

⁶³ Cf. above, note 18.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Strom.* VII 95, 8.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Strom.* VII 95, 6.

⁶⁶ Cf. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 399.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Strom.* II 9, 6: "One who has believed the Scriptures has a firm judgement. He takes the voice of God, who has given the Scriptures to us, as an irrefutable proof."

other schools of Christian doctrine, failing to follow the ‘rule of truth,’ violate the Scriptures according to their wishes, the true researchers, as Clement portrays them, are supposed to demonstrate their statements about the Scriptures from the Scriptures themselves, thus reaching conviction in a demonstrative manner on the basis of faith.⁶⁸

And so at the end of the seventh book, while “cleansing” the way towards a “new start” of his philosophical project, Clement reveals to his readers the purpose of the terminological equipment he adopts from Greek epistemological discussions: to answer the ‘sceptical’ challenge of the Greeks and the Jews by developing a reliable method of scriptural interpretation.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Strom.* VII 96, 1: ... οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀπ’ αὐτῶν περὶ αὐτῶν τῶν γραφῶν τελείως ἀποδεικνύντες, ἐκ πίστεως πειθόμεθα ἀποδεικτικῶς. Cf. Jean Pépin, “Hermeneutik,” *RAC* 14, 758.

⁶⁹ My thanks are due to Alain Le Boulluec and Annewies van den Hoek for helpful comments on this paper.

THE NOTION OF 'HERESY' IN *STROMATEIS* VII
AND ITS USE IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S POLEMIC

Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski

The issue of heresy in the second century has become highly controversial among modern scholars. The traditional, long-term view that the Fathers of the church were 'right' and represented 'true' Christianity, while heretics were 'wrong' and projected erroneous theology, has been seriously challenged in many recent publications. In the light of that revision, Judas, for example, becomes the most faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, while the early Christian apologists represent the 'dark forces' of the emerging institutional church. The new outlook offers an apology for the traditionally 'bad characters' such as, for example, Valentinus, while the ecclesiastical authors are radically mistrusted.

How does this changing new attitude influence our perception of Clement of Alexandria and his polemic against 'heretics'? How can we 'allocate' his personal and passionate disagreement with his theological adversaries? Two decades ago, in his illuminating study on the notion of 'heresy' in Greek literature, Alan Le Boulluec offered a number of insightful observations on Clement's theological stance and the value of his polemic.¹ More recently, yet another important contribution came from Mark Edwards, who reviews Clement's encounter with 'heresy' that he found in his milieu.² In my paper, although limited by its scope, I shall argue that Clement of Alexandria's fundamental disagreement with various Christian adversaries emerged from two sources: first, his theory of scriptural exegesis and, second, his ecclesiology. Clement's exegesis and ecclesiology led to a coherent ethical, didactic, and theological outlook. They also stimulated Clement of Alexandria to challenge his adversaries.

¹ Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, II^e-III^e siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), esp. volume II, 391-438.

² Mark J. Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy in the Early Church* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). Edwards sums up Clement's attitude in a brief note: "Omnivorous as Clement is, he seldom returns empty-handed from an encounter with those whom he regards as heretics. Where he finds licensed turpitude, as in the case of the Basilideans, he does not temper his condemnation; Valentinian tenets, on the other hand, he cites frequently and not always with reproof" (ibid. 58).

1. LOCATING CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA IN HIS *POLIS*

According to Walter Bauer's famous theory, the earliest form of Christianity in Egypt (and Alexandria) was 'heretical' and in particular 'gnostic'.³ This bold and provocative thesis has been criticized in many publications⁴ but still raises some questions and debates.⁵ Bauer's hypothesis reverses the previous model,⁶ which claimed that heresy was a later deformation of the original orthodoxy as the error comes after what is believed to be right. In the case of Alexandria, it is plausible to accept that instead of just one decisive direction of doctrinal evolution, i.e. the dominant 'heretical' or 'orthodox' lineage, there was a pluralistic, but not peaceful, coexistence of various Christian groups. While the emergence of the earliest forms of Christianity in Alexandria remains in obscurity, much later, in Clement's period, we may see a clear reflection of the whole spectrum of various traditions flourishing in the polis. It has to be said that this polyphony was not welcome to Clement. Nonetheless, the diversity of such a cultural and intellectual background had a clear impact on Clement of Alexandria's understanding of orthodoxy. Even if Clement did not appreciate the existence of that polyphony, the spirit of competition between various Christian schools influenced his way of thinking about orthodoxy. Alexandria and its cultural milieu produced not only 'bad characters,' arrogant, mischievous heretics, but earlier, it had stimulated the outstanding scholar Philo and his exegesis,⁷ while on the streets the voices of Middle Platonist⁸ and Neopythagorean teachers⁹ could be heard. In addition some enig-

³ Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. R. Kraft and G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 44–53.

⁴ For example: Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* in *The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy for 1977* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979). Cf. Daniel J. Harrington, 'The Reception of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* During the Last Decade,' *HTR* 73 (1980) 289–298.

⁵ See Lewis Ayres, 'Introduction,' in *JECs* 14 (2006) 395–398.

⁶ The 'father' of the classical model which claimed that 'orthodoxy' chronologically precedes heresy was Tertullian, *De prescriptione haereticorum*, XXIX.

⁷ Cf. Burton L. Mack, 'Philo Judaeus and Exegetical Traditions in Alexandria,' *ANRW* 21.1 (1984) 228–271, esp. 242 f.

⁸ For Eudorus of Alexandria (64 B.C.E.–19 C.E.) see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists 80 B.C.E. to C.E. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1996), 115–139, more in Edward J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley/London: University of California Press, 2006), 143–168.

⁹ Ammonius Sakkas (2nd century C.E.), whom Dillon listed among the Neopythagoreans in Alexandria; see Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 380–383. On the enigmatic figure of Plotinus' teacher see Frederic M. Schroeder, 'Ammonius Sakkas,' *ANRW* 36.1 (1987) 493–526.

matic figures, such as Chaeremon and Pamphilus, linked with Hermetism¹⁰ and representing, as Dillon once put it, 'the Platonic Underworld,'¹¹ contributed to the colourful intellectual mosaic of Alexandria, where Clement found his academic and religious home. The arrival and later flourishing of Christianity in the *polis* matched the already-existing pattern of the milieu. Christianity in its various forms absorbed what was culturally already there. One such example is the case of Basilides, whose theology assimilated elements of intellectual inquest and speculation, while Valentinus produced theology open to poetry and imagination. The followers of these and many other Christian teachers coexisted on the same streets, often 'converting' from one school to another or participating in the discussions of different schools at the same time. No doubt rivalry existed among the schools, as well as between the students in the same school.¹² Alexandria was thus a culturally vibrant, academically thriving, cosmopolitan city when Clement arrived there to find his ultimate teacher and Christian community.

2. THE SEMANTICS OF THE TERM *HAIREISIS* IN *STROMATEIS* VII

As we may see from Stählin's *Register*,¹³ the central term *haireisis* (αἵρεσις) has many meanings in the whole of Clement's oeuvre. It is related to 'the act of choice' (Entscheidung);¹⁴ it is also a synonym for a 'school'¹⁵ or a 'sect' (Schule, Sekte),¹⁶ and it also refers to a particular philosophical Greek intellectual community¹⁷ or a barbarian one.¹⁸ The same term refers to a religious

¹⁰ See details in Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes. A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: University Press, 1986), 161–163; 177–186 and 193.

¹¹ Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 384. Ismo Dunderberg offers a critique of Dillon's designation arguing that the clear line which separates orthodoxy and heresy is drawn in a very questionable way and expresses more apologetic concerns; see Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism. Myth, Lifestyle and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 17 f.

¹² See more in Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 46.

¹³ Clemens Alexandrinus, IV, *Register* (GCS 39; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980).

¹⁴ E.g.: *Strom.* I 13, 1; 17, 2; 84, 1.5; 89, 1; II 12, 1; III 67, 2; IV 91, 2; VI 72, 1; 156, 2; VII 12, 4; 48, 7; VIII 22, 3; *Exc.* 56, 1; *Quis dives* 10, 2; *Ecl.* 22, 3.

¹⁵ *Strom.* I 37, 6. See also I 57, 1; VI 5, 1; 35, 1; 55, 3; 67, 2; 83, 1; 89, 3; VIII 16, 1.

¹⁶ *Strom.* I 57, 4; II 117, 5.

¹⁷ Stoic school: *Strom.* I 64, 1; VII 92, 4; 95, 1; Peripatetic: *Protr.* 66, 4; *Strom.* I 63, 5; II 127, 3.

¹⁸ *Strom.* I 57, 1; VII 90, 3–4.

sect.¹⁹ In the latter case the term signifies Christian 'heresy' (christliche Sekte, Häresie, Irrlehre).²⁰ The last synonym calls for more careful examination. Clement's use of the term in his *Stromateis* shows that the term αἵρεσις possesses a highly negative connotation. It represents a wrong, even malicious choice, often of an intellectual nature; it suggests conscious deformation of a message. Next, that sort of miscomprehension expresses itself in immoral acts and a misleading ethical code. It produces erroneous teaching of a religious nature and ultimately creates false concepts of God. Consequently those Christians who disfigured a religious message and then made immoral choices voluntarily placed themselves at the opposite pole to orthodoxy, that of heterodoxy (ἑτερόδοξος).²¹ Clement of Alexandria does not claim to be unbiased in drawing a clear line between orthodoxy and heresy. He believed deeply that his stance represented authentic apostolic teaching, while his theological opponents represented newly invented deviation. The seventh book of the *Stromateis* provides us with the enormous richness of Clement's rhetorical tools used to undermine and even ridicule the religious deviation of heresy. Limited by the scope of time, I wish to point out only selected passages from the later part of the seventh book as these statements exemplify Clement's polemic. The first statement from the fifteenth chapter of the seventh book declares:

Further, we know that it is necessary to give the terminology of the heresies (τῶν αἱρέσεων) in order that the truth may be clearly distinguished from them. For the sophists (οἱ σοφισταί) steal certain fragments of the truth for the inquiry of mankind and bury them in the human system that they themselves have devised, and then glory in presiding over what is rather a school than a church (ἀρχοῦσι προϊστάσθαι διατριβῆς μᾶλλον ἢ ἐκκλησίας).²²

This statement ends the explicit section focused on the polemic against heresy which we find in the seventh book. It concludes Clement's argument against those Christian candidates who are scandalized by the inter-Christian quarrel which engendered the multiplicity of schools and controversies. Henry Chadwick's English translation of the passages quoted

¹⁹ *Strom.* I 69, 6; III 25, 7; VII 41, 1.

²⁰ *Paed.* I 18, 4; III 9, 4; *Strom.* I 15, 2; 44, 3; 95, 6.7; 96, 1; 99, 4; II 34, 4; 48, 1; 52, 6; 67, 4; 74, 4; 79, 3; III 11, 2; 25, 1; 40, 1.2; 71, 1; 98, 5; IV 2, 2; 170, 2; V 26, 4; VI 123, 3; VII 89, 4; 90, 5; 91, 2.3; 92, 3.7; 93, 4; 94, 4; 97, 1.3; 98, 4; 101, 1.3; 103, 6; 105, 5; 107, 3.5; 108, 1; 109, 1.

²¹ As will be shown below in reference to *Strom.* VII 92, 7.

²² *Strom.* VII 92, 7; trans. Henry Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity* (LCC 2; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954).

above misses Clement's significant rhetorical effort to portray the aggressive nature of heresy, here 'choice/partition' (αἵρεσις), as the scattering of the limbs of Pentheus, the mythological king of Thebes.²³ The original unity and coherence of the truth, like Pentheus' body, is torn to pieces by heretics, the 'modern' Bacchants. This tragic state of affairs may have discouraged some people from accepting Christianity as the way to salvation. Consequently some of the candidates aspiring to become Christians no longer wished to pursue their interest in Christianity further.

Clement's rhetorical technique aims to show that heresy as a phenomenon is not a new, or exclusively Christian, shameful characteristic or even malady. In the Greek tradition of philosophy, Clement of Alexandria is keen to remind his educated audience that there were always true teachers who taught genuine wisdom, and intellectual mercenaries who, for a particular purpose, abused the elements of true doctrine. The same is happening now, he points out, among Christians. Clement's rhetorical narrative produces an imaginative apology. It is written as an explanation of the fundamental difference, in the author's view, between genuine teachers and sophists (οἱ σοφισταί),²⁴ accusing the latter of "stealing fragments of the truth" (ἀποσπάσαντες ἐπὶ λύμῃ).²⁵ Those bogus teachers, in Clement's view, deliberately undermine the apostolic teaching preserved in the church and

²³ Clement's intention is well observed in the French edition of the seventh book by Alain Le Boulluec, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Les Stromates. Stomate VII* (SC 428; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), 282, n. 2, with a reference to *Strom.* I 57, 1.

²⁴ I believe that here Clement is not making a polemic against a representative of the Second Sophistic. His use of the terms refers to the general Platonic distinction between a 'lover of wisdom' (φιλόσοφος) and sophists (σοφιστής), itinerant teachers providing education for fees. In Clement's depreciative view a heretic/sophist was able to speculate on any theological issue just to attract more followers, absorb their attention, and poison their minds or souls with erroneous teaching.

²⁵ *Nota bene*, the motif of 'theft' of the Greek philosophers from 'the Hebrews,' or from Hebrew wisdom is one of the main theories in the *Stromateis* which aim to clarify the origin of some parallels, as Clement believed, between Greek and Hebrew wisdom. Clement of Alexandria, like Philo and Justin Martyr before him, wishes to prove that some true doctrines among Greek philosophical schools are dependent on the original Hebrew sources, but were 'stolen'; cf. e.g. Philo, *Qaest. Gen.* IV 152; Justin, *1 Apol.* 44, 59 and 60. For more literature, see Arthur J. Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989); Peter Pilhofer, *Presbyteron kreitton. Der Alterbeweis der jüdischen und christlichen Apologeten und seine Vorgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990); Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses. The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteborg: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995); Winrich A. Löhr, "The Theft of the Greeks: Christian Self Definition in the Age of the Schools," *RHE* 95 (2002) 403–426. I wish to thank Matyáš Havrda for drawing my attention to these studies.

create a multiplicity of groups based on the cacophony of their teaching.²⁶ There is no doubt that, for Clement, the church and its unity appeared first chronologically, while erroneous sophistry, division, and a variety of doctrines came later. His argument shows that he believed in the original unity of the truth, while he saw heresies as a recent phenomenon. Clement's theory of the origin of philosophy argues that Greek philosophers had stolen fragments of the truth from the Biblical prophets without admitting it. The Greeks treated the stolen doctrines as their own property.²⁷ Equally, according to Clement of Alexandria, his contemporaneous 'sophists,' here selective creators of their own versions of the Christian message, had stolen elements of the truth that belong to the church. The heretics interpreted these elements according to their own uncontrolled passions and desires.²⁸

The beginning of the sixteenth chapter of the same book of the *Stromateis* provides the readers still interested in becoming Christians with two methods of distinguishing heresy from orthodoxy.²⁹ One of the methods is presented as the clear distinction between orthodox "accurate scientific knowledge" (ἀκριβοὺς ἐπιστήμης) and heretical "quick fallacious reasoning" (προπετοὺς δοξοσοφίας). Then the second method supporting this distinction helps him to deal with various religious narratives verifying their significance. It seems that for Clement 'orthodox' or correct interpretation of the Scriptures and theological reflection includes and values arguments of a philosophical and therefore rational nature. In his view, 'heretical' deliberation, on the contrary, misinterprets the 'objective' voice of the Scriptures and twists its message according to the specific needs of an individual teacher. On another level, the same distinction can be seen in Clement's rhetoric as the crucial opposition between philosophy and sophistry: the Socratic type of universal wisdom *versus* hair-splitting, disconnected, and argumentative claims. This construction of 'heresy,' like all other constructions offered by Clement of Alexandria, has to be taken in the context of his personal polemical and theological agenda. Still, his recommended method argues for rational, critical investigation as opposed to collecting impressions based on sensory experience. This crucial epistemological distinction

²⁶ On this occasion the passage shows the contrast between the singular noun 'the church' and the plural form of the noun 'heresy.'

²⁷ This is only one among Clement's three versions of the origin of philosophy. See *Strom.* I 87, 2.

²⁸ See more in *Strom.* III 39, 2.

²⁹ *Strom.* VII 93, 1–105, 6.

reaffirms the value of "rational investigation" as opposed to "self-conceit based on the senses" (οἷσις).³⁰ In other words, Clement suggests approaching a religious doctrine with an analytical mind. The student should not be deceived by the 'ear-pleasing sound' of a religious teaching, clever interpretation of the Scriptures, or the attractive appearance of a skilful orator. Further expounding Clement's suggestion, we may say that orthodox doctrine does not match human expectation but inspires the listener to go beyond a perception dominated mainly by the senses and feelings. On the contrary, heretical teaching overshadows the original divine message by assimilating only some of its elements in order to justify moral disorder:

And though all men have the same faculty of judgement, some find their grounds for belief in following the dictates of reason, while others surrender themselves to pleasures and wrest the Scripture to suit their desires (οἱ δὲ ἡδοναῖς σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐκδεδωκότες βιάζονται πρὸς τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τὴν γραφὴν). But, methinks, the lover of truth needs energy of the soul; for they who set themselves to the greatest tasks must meet the greatest disasters, unless they have received the canon of the truth from the truth itself (τὸν κανόνα τῆς ἀληθείας παρ' αὐτῆς λαβόντες).³¹

The passage reveals a very significant characteristic of Clement's view on orthodoxy. It refers to 'the canon/rule of the truth' (ὁ κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας) as a norm of theological distinction.³² This norm separates established doctrine from recently proclaimed false teaching. Unlike other apologists (e.g. *1 Clement*,³³ Irenaeus of Lyons,³⁴ Tertullian,³⁵ and Hippolytus of Rome³⁶), Clement of Alexandria does not highlight the apostolic succession as

³⁰ *Strom.* VII 93, 3: μέγιστον δὲ τὸ καὶ τὴν οἷσιν ἀποθέσθαι. Stählin points to Epictetus' philosophical polemic against οἷσις in *Dissertationes* II 17, 1, while Alain Le Boulluec provides further statements which reject this idea in II 17, 39; III 23, 16; 14, 8. Cf. idem, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Les Stromates. Stromate VII* (SC 428; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997). Clement's assimilation of the epistemological, rather sophisticated theory aims to exemplify his main argument against heretics: like some Greek sophists on previous occasions, they lost sight of the unity and even objective character of the truth and plunged into particularities which only feed the senses. However, as able teachers, they are guilty of the erroneous misconduct which will be pointed out in the following section.

³¹ *Strom.* VII 94, 4–6; trans. Chadwick. See also VII 93, 3–6.

³² This important notion had already appeared in Irenaeus of Lyons' polemic with his theological adversaries, cf. *Adv. haer.* I 9, 4; 22, 1; II 27, 1; III 101; 12, 7; 15, 1; IV 35, 4. I believe that Clement took account of Irenaeus' notion and its value to his theory of orthodoxy. See also Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 172–175.

³³ *1 Clem.* 42–44.

³⁴ *Adv. haer.* III 3, 3–4.

³⁵ *Praescr.* 20–21 and 32.

³⁶ *Ref., praef.*

transmission of the genuine Christian teaching from one presbyter to another. However, he is well aware of that concept.³⁷ It is highly remarkable that Clement has never named his *episkopos*, or that even in the case of his own master, Pantaenus, Clement does not link him with an apostolic disciple in a parallel way to Irenaeus of Lyons.³⁸ In addition Clement of Alexandria is fully aware that his opponents, such as the followers of Basilides and the Valentinians, claim 'the apostolic succession.'³⁹ Therefore his approach is creative and original: he stresses the value of direct contact with 'the truth' that is the divine Logos and the universal church as opposed to a recently invented local school.⁴⁰ Clement points out that his notion of the canon (ὁ κανὼν) brings together in harmony two crucial elements: the Mosaic Law, together with the Prophets (Hebrew Scriptures), and the teaching of the Lord/Christ (Christian revelation).⁴¹ To Clement of Alexandria, unlike, for example, Marcion of Synope, there is an on-going continuation between the Hebrew Scriptures and the emerging Christian tradition represented by the universal church. In addition, it is personal contact with the divine Logos, the Truth himself, which, along with the teaching, plants the believer in the soil of authentic Christianity.

In order to understand Clement's intention better, it is helpful to quote another of his observations. In a different context, while following some 'barbarian' (οἱ βάρβαροι) sages, mainly Philo of Alexandria, Clement identifies the truth with the divine Logos.⁴² This time with the help of Plato's

³⁷ For a number of references to Clement's various works, where he refers to the teaching of the apostles, or his own master Pantaenus, see Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 175.

³⁸ *Adv. haer.* III 3, 4, with a clear indication that as a young man, Irenaeus encountered Polycarp, therefore faithfully represents the teaching of the disciple of the apostles. This construction allows Irenaeus to claim apostolic authority for his theological stance.

³⁹ *Strom.* VII 106, 4. This was a rather common claim in the second century, whose aim was to establish the credentials of a particular διδάσκαλος. According to Clement, Basilides appealed to Glaucias, Peter's interpreter, and through Glaucias directly to the apostle Peter. Valentinus, through contact with Theodas, claimed to be part of the apostolic tradition originating in the apostle Paul. In a similar way, the followers of Carpocrates saw themselves as heirs of Mariamne, Salome, or Martha; cf. Hippolytus, *Ref.* V 7, 1.

⁴⁰ *Strom.* VII 107, 1; the argument based on the antiquity of teaching will be discussed in the next section of this paper.

⁴¹ *Strom.* VI 125, 3. Clement's methodology brings together in an original way three hermeneutical principles: the Law, the Prophets, and the teaching of the Lord. That confirmed unity reassured the importance of all three elements, and not only against radical critiques of the value of the Hebrew Scriptures, such as that of Marcion of Synope. It also challenged much more moderate views on the nature of the Jewish law among some Valentinians, such as Ptolemaeus, cf. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, Book 1 (Sects 1–46), trans. Frank Williams (NHS 35; Leiden: Brill, 1987), 198–204.

⁴² See *Strom.* V 16, 1–3.

Republic (V 475e), Clement shows that those who "love to contemplate the truth" (τοὺς ἀληθείας ... φιλοθεάμονας) are true philosophers. In this hermeneutics, which brings together in harmony Hebrew and Greek sapiential elements (i.e. the search for true wisdom and love of the truth), Clement pronounces one significant but also original notion. The personal relationship with the divine Logos gives the teacher/philosopher and the student the correct understanding of Christian doctrine. This personal commitment, based on the experience of being in a relationship with the divine Logos, while also engaging in the experience of God through the Logos-Christ on a profoundly intellectual level, offers the genuine teacher the ability to discern between false and true interpretations of Scripture. It also supports and fosters the correct elaboration of that message in theological reflection. 'The canon of the truth' is first and foremost the correct association with the divine Revealer. 'The canon of the truth' thus means an *orthopraxis*, a coherent way of thinking, believing, acting, and teaching. In the light of Clement's oeuvre, contemplation of God is only possible through earlier ethical progress. Contemplation is not a sudden, surprising event which bears no relation to previous ethical effort; it is an outcome of becoming more intimate with the Logos-Christ and more familiar with God's realm. As we may see, Clement does not see any tension between this individual, contemplative experience of God and the doctrine that is taught in the apostolic, historical church. The interpretation of Scripture, the crucial factor in the emergence of heresy, by a particular teacher/philosopher, if it is based on personal experience of God, will always agree with the doctrine of the church. This seems to be one of Clement's axioms. Once again, behind this confident statement is Clement's philosophical and theological supposition about the chronological priority of the truth and its unity over false opinions and the further discrepancy caused by them. In the context of the Scriptures, a holistic, inter-connected reading of Biblical passages proves whether or not a particular theology harmonizes with the doctrine of the apostolic church. On the contrary, a selective exegesis, sophisticated query, and a search for populism lead to heresy. Clement criticizes his opponents' epistemology (based on sense perception) that cannot correctly examine, understand, and proclaim God's truth.⁴³ Clement once more contrasts his postulate of rational theology with the false sophistry of heretical teaching. Another brief, but highly significant, declaration in the seventh book allocates three specific stages of mind to three groups of people:

⁴³ *Strom.* VII 98, 4.

Again of the three different mental conditions, ignorance (ἀγνοίας), conceit (οἰήσεως) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη); ignorance is characteristic of the heathen, knowledge of the true church, conceit of the heretics.⁴⁴

This partition alters Plato's famous epistemological distinction from the *Republic*⁴⁵ and clearly highlights the specific status of heretics, who have fallen into conceit or 'false notion' (οἴησις). It is evident that the epistemological position of heretics, according to Clement's argument, is worse. Christian heretics are in the most dramatic circumstances as their stance is based on self-conceit related to a carnal, unintelligent, and unspiritual reasoning. This shallow and erroneous thinking leaves them in darkness, binds their minds to their senses, and deforms their vision, while as teachers they produce poisonous doctrines. The quoted passage also hints at Clement's original parallel, which makes a link between intellectual growth in the knowledge of God (here ἐπιστήμη), with a corresponding commitment to the church (ecclesiology). Epistemology and theology, or philosophical theology, are equivalent trajectories in Clement's project of constructing the border between heresy and orthodoxy. In consequence, errors and misjudgements in epistemology inevitably, in Clement's view, lead to deformation of theology, that is, to heresy.

3. CLEMENT'S MODEL OF THE CHURCH AS AN OPPOSITION TO CHRISTIAN SECTS

Arising naturally from the previous context, Clement's vision of the nature of the church emerges. In this paper I am not able to elaborate all the details of the richness of Clement's ecclesiology. I have done it recently in another publication,⁴⁶ but I wish to point out some important characteristics of the notion of the church we find in the seventh book of the *Stromateis*. It is not accidental that the seventh book, while presenting Clement's strong anti-heretical views, also offers his most developed theory of the church. One

⁴⁴ *Strom.* VII 100, 7; trans. Chadwick.

⁴⁵ See *Republic* V 477a–478d. Clement of Alexandria amended Plato's distinction of 'knowledge,' 'ignorance,' and 'opinion' by replacing the latter with the Stoic notion of 'conceit' (οἴησις). Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* VII 23. The correction of Plato serves Clement's polemical purpose better. Then he applies conceit to his opponents, highlighting that their theology stems from imagination and irrational beliefs and therefore has nothing in common with orthodox scientific theology.

⁴⁶ I have examined this and other passages in my study *Clement of Alexandria. A Project of Christian Perfection* (London/New York: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2008), 189–225.

particular passage (VII 107, 3–108, 1) has to be considered as Clement's crucial notion of his church as the embodiment of orthodoxy and the repudiator of heresy.⁴⁷ Clement of Alexandria produces one of the earliest coherent Christian notions of the church, which refers to the two following characteristics:

- a. Unity as a mark of the truth *versus* Diversity as a mark of errors
- b. Antiquity as a mark of authenticity *versus* Novelty as a mark of recent diversions

It is quite evident that Clement's notion of the church is a response to the challenges and confusion caused by the presence of various Christian groups in Alexandria and their claim to represent 'genuine' or 'original' Christianity. Against that background of voices, Clement offers an intellectual 'signpost,' clear guidance as to how to verify the claims of these groups and identify the apostolic church. The main accents are put on the unity (μία) and the antiquity (ἀρχαία) of the church. In this context Clement's ecclesiology takes its origin from his Logos theology. As the divine Logos is one and ancient (i.e. pre-mundane), He is the Principle (ἀρχή ἡ μία) of the authentic church. Second, as the Logos is one, his real voice or teaching preserves and leads to unity. These strong indications suggest that among the Christians in Alexandria, at least in Clement's time, there were communities with various leaders who claimed their authority on the basis of different apostles and their theological descendants. A neophyte might have

⁴⁷ *Strom.* VII 107, 3–108, 1: "From what has been said I think it has been made plain that unity is a characteristic of the true (μίαν εἶναι τὴν ἀληθῆ), the really ancient (ἀρχαίαν) church, into which those that are righteous according to the divine purpose are enrolled (cf. Rom 8:28). For God being one (ένος) and the Lord being one (ένος), that also which is supremely honoured is the object of praise, because it stands alone, being a copy of the First Principle (μίμημα ὃν ἀρχῆς τῆς μιᾶς); at any rate the one church (ἐκκλησία ἡ μία), which they [i.e. the heretics] strive to break up into many sects, is bound up with the principle of unity. We say, then, that the ancient and catholic church (καθολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν) stands alone in essence and idea and principle and pre-eminence, gathering together, by the will of God through the one Lord, into the unity of the one faith (cf. Eph 4:13), built upon the fitting covenants (or rather the one covenant given at different times) all those who are already enlisted in it (Rom 8:28; Eph 1:5), whom God pre-ordained, having known before the foundation of the world that they would be righteous (Eph 1:4). And, further, the pre-eminence of the church, like the principle of constitution, is in accordance with the Monad (μονάδα), surpassing all other things and having nothing like or equal to itself. Of this we shall speak on a future occasion. But of the heresies some are called after the name of the founder, as that which is called after Valentinus, and Marcion, and Basilides, though the last sect professes to cite the opinion of Matthias. I say 'professes,' for, as the teaching, so also the tradition of all the apostles has been one and the same." Trans. Chadwick.

been really confused as to whether or not he or she belonged to the genuine church and whether or not he or she was on the correct path to salvation. Clement's polemic and apology for the apostolic church seems to answer both issues: anarchy and the confusion reigning among his fellow-believers.

4. CLEMENT'S LEGACY—CAN WE TRUST IT?

So far I have listened to Clement's testimony with full attention and in a sympathetic way. Now I have to ask some questions. There is no doubt that Clement promotes his version of Christianity, as opposed to that of his adversaries. His polemic against heretics and his vision of the church both contain strong elements of passion. This passion is equally evident in his detailed critique of his adversaries, here heretics/sophists, and his strong idealization of his own church community.

In the case of his polemic against his adversaries, I am not convinced that all the negative attributes ascribed to them, including their desire "to steal," "cheat," and "pull apart the apostolic church," could describe their true intentions. It is possible to see, and in the light of the complexity of the Nag Hammadi documents we may see, that some Christian schools were aiming to protect the autonomy of the church, while developing its theology in a different direction from the one defended by Clement. However, that exegetical and charismatic autonomy was seen by Clement of Alexandria as a threat to the stability of the church, as religious sectarianism and exegetical anarchy.⁴⁸

Secondly, Clement's eulogy of his church community seems to be highly idealistic and almost mystical in its core outlook. Clement of Alexandria, as the defender and promoter of the unity and antiquity of the universal/catholic church, does not mention his *episkopos* who guaranteed the historical linkage between Clement's community and the apostles. He also

⁴⁸ A similar charge appears earlier in Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. haer.* I 9, 4. Was Clement's critique influenced by Irenaeus' opinion? Clement knew some of Irenaeus' notions and even writings, but I am inclined to accept that Clement's direct contact with his theological opponents and possible knowledge of their exegetical techniques provided him with an independent view. For early Christian exegetes the understanding of the Scriptures as a unity of the aim (*σκοπός*) was very significant. Therefore any effort to select specific passages and elaborate a particular doctrine on individual scriptural statements out of their literary context was a dangerous technique leading to various theological errors. For more information on *σκοπός* in relation to patristic interpretation, see Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: University Press, 2007), esp. 21–27.

does not explore the theological significance of different opinions in the earlier stages of his church, such as the tensions between Paul's authority and that of the other apostles. On the contrary, Clement sees the origin of the church in a romantic way, which reaffirms his current theology and agenda. Still, as a witness, and as one of the most creative and inspiring theologians of his time and certainly place, he has to be taken seriously.

Thirdly, Clement's apology for orthodoxy and, at the same time, his construing of heresy rest on the following three suppositions:

- a. Clement believes in the vital association between the chronological priority of the truth (orthodoxy) over the later appearance of malignant deformation and error (heresy);
- b. Clement assumes that the main characteristic of the truth (orthodoxy) is unity, while the evident symptom of error (heresy) is diversity, here understood as a negative characteristic;
- c. Clement is convinced that the truth (orthodoxy) represents purity, while error comes with contamination.

Finally, Clement is sure that the truth can be discerned with human reason and critically and rationally verified, while error, like delusion or false perception, comes from sense perception and self-deception.

I have no doubt that Clement's beliefs and his further apologetic effort originated in his genuine conviction that all his assumptions were accurate. In the light of these suppositions he portrayed his adversaries and their teaching and ethical (or non-ethical) behaviour negatively. But even if we allow Clement of Alexandria to remain a man of his time and one of the most ardent and certainly one of the most articulate opponents of heresy, we should not take his artistic portrayal as a realistic photo of his milieu. Again, other sources and particularly the evidence of the complexity of the doctrines found in the Nag Hammadi Library call on us to make every effort to remain careful and objective with categorization, based as it is on the evidence of just one side of the conflict.

5. CONCLUSION

Our models of emerging orthodoxy in the earliest Christianity in Alexandria remain provisional as long as we do not have new, sufficient evidence to reconstruct a particular historical and theological trajectory. Neither Bauer's thesis nor his strong opponents can convincingly prove whether

orthodoxy predated or followed heresy. In this context Clement of Alexandria's testimony has huge importance as long as it is taken as the voice of a witness who was never unbiased and never aimed to be. In a summary of Clement's view on heresy in the light of selected passages, we can conclude that he was fully aware of a sharp distinction between the orthodox position and heretical aberrations. Clement of Alexandria argued for the original unity of the truth and the actual unity of the apostolic church in contrast to the pluralism of heretical sects and the multiplicity of doctrines. That inner unity of the church and theology is based, in his view, on unity with God, as his ecclesiology is directly related to Christology. This strong view also has surprising features. Clement reinterprets in a creative way the idea of apostolic succession based not on the chain of bishops and priests, but rather on a sequence of authoritative teachers such as Pantaenus.⁴⁹ Therefore his concept cannot be seen as yet another simple reproduction of 'apostolic succession' known to us from the apologists. It is correct to stress that Clement of Alexandria saw himself in an ecclesiastical setting (*ekklesia*), but equally he was proud to represent the authentic school (*didaskaleion*). Therefore his passionate, personal, and highly intelligent polemic against his opponents brought together not just one but two centres of learning: spiritual and intellectual. Ultimately his polemic pointed to the spiritual (moral) and intellectual (critical) integrity of a Christian life. That integrity was achievable through the study of Scripture, which was only correctly read, discussed, and researched within his church.

⁴⁹ It is interesting that although Clement of Alexandria names his own Christian teacher Pantaenus (*Ecl.* 56, 2), he does not make any effort to prove that Pantaenus himself belonged to the apostolic tradition either in Alexandria or beyond the city.

APPROXIMATING CHURCH AND SCHOOL IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S *STROMATEIS* VII

Oleh Kindiy

An important question Ulrich Neymeyr once asked while studying early Christian theology was what the role and status of a teacher is in early Christianity.¹ He made a helpful distinction and categorisation of early Christian teachers, namely, that in the first three centuries of the Christian era there were at least five types of teachers, such as prophets, itinerant and professional teachers, ministers, and catechists, each of whom followed his or her specific vocation, even though their functions could certainly overlap at one point or another. In this context, while considering the example of Clement of Alexandria, Neymeyr came to the conclusion that Clement must have been a professional teacher. He argued that Clement did not simply provide elementary and advanced religious education to his Christian pupils but rather attempted to develop a higher level of a specifically Christianized system of guidance for a soul (*Seelenführung*) that included care for the self, study of the Holy Scriptures and eloquence in them, and contemplation of the divine Being.

A major factor in Neymeyr's treatment of Clement's *didaskalos* was Clement's personal relationship to the local church. Neymeyr, following Friedrich Quatember's argument,² was not entirely persuaded as to whether, while offering his pupils *Seelenführung*, Clement also shared the duties of the priest, a position that Hugo Koch argued in an article dating back to 1921.³ Neymeyr's case turns on two main points. The first is the title of μακάριος πρεσβύτερος, one with which Alexander, the bishop of Jerusalem, honoured Clement in his letter to the church in Antioch written between 215 and 225, and which Eusebius cited and repeated in his *Historia ecclesiastica*

¹ Ulrich Neymeyr, *Die christliche Lehrer im zweiten Jahrhundert: ihre Lehrtätigkeit, ihr Selbstverständnis und ihre Geschichte* (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1989). For a broader analysis of the scholarship on Clement's notion of the *didaskalos*, see Oleh Kindiy, *Christos Didaskalos: The Christology of Clement of Alexandria* (Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008), 124–198.

² Cf. Friedrich Quatember, *Die christliche Lebenshaltung des Klemens von Alexandrien nach seinem Pädagogus* (Wien: Herder, 1946), 15 n. 13.

³ Hugo Koch, "War Klemens von Alexandrien Priester?" *ZNW* 20 (1921) 43–48.

(VI 13, 3 and VI 14, 9), thus introducing it to the later ecclesiastical tradition that portrayed Clement clad in sacerdotal garments. Neymeyr took Alexander's title for Clement as titular and honorary and insisted that it did not relate to his sacerdotal functions.⁴ Second, Clement's allegorizing interest in, and explanation of, Christian rituals and sacraments, in the light of his guidance of the soul, as opposed to their literal descriptions and performances, led several scholars, including Neymeyr, to believe that Clement belonged to the cohort of sheep (lay teachers) rather than to that of pastors.

If Clement was not a priest and was not immersed in Christian rituals and sacraments as a priest but was only interested in their meanings and applications to the spiritual realm of the true gnostic, then as a result of such a 'spiritual' approach his portrayal of the *didaskalos* could also be interpreted only in 'spiritualized' terms. In that case, his portrayal could approach the contemporaneous Gnostic 'spiritualized' depiction of Christ, which Clement, while forging his Christian portrait of Christ, was well aware of and used, sometimes critically and sometimes sympathetically. Neymeyr did not make such direct conclusions, as he recognized that Clement was part of a concrete community and church and not of an imaginary entity, and yet he seemed to lean towards such an interpretation of Clement's *Christos didaskalos* to a large extent.⁵

Neymeyr's methodological approach to analyzing Clement's conception of the *didaskalos* resembles that of Fascher.⁶ He looks at Clement's writings of the *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus*, *Stromateis*, and *Quis dives salvetur* in consecutive order to find and interpret those passages that have direct and indirect relevance to the subject. Neymeyr built his argument in the framework suggested by Knauber, that which incorporated such categories as a system of regulations for human societal life (πολιτεία), instruction in the core precepts of Christian dogma (κατήχησις), and the enactment and exercise of the true faith in everyday living (πίστις), which Knauber derived from

⁴ Cf. Neymeyr, *Die christliche Lehrer*, 46–50. That Clement was rather a professional teacher and not a priest was demonstrated by Annewies van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," *HTR* 90 (1997) 71–79.

⁵ Cf. Neymeyr, *Die christliche Lehrer*, 86: "Die realgeschichtliche Betrachtungsweise der Schriften des Clemens vermittelt somit einen Eindruck von seiner vielfältigen Lehrtätigkeit, die sich aber auf den Unterricht und die Seelenführung beschränkt zu haben scheint, denn es sind keine Schriften des Clemens überliefert, die nicht mit dem Unterricht und der Seelenführung in unmittelbarem Zusammenhang stehen."

⁶ Erich Fascher, "Jesus der Lehrer," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 79 (1954) 326–342.

the *Paedagogus*.⁷ However, Neymeyr's main focus was on the *Stromateis*, which provided him with the additional evidence relevant to Clement's portrait of the divine *didaskalos*. It also illuminated Neymeyr's understanding of Clement's hermeneutics and symbolism, the relationship between faith and knowledge that corresponded to the elementary and advanced levels of Christian indoctrination, and the image of a true gnostic, who was the ultimate model for Clement's notion of the perfect teacher. Neymeyr's interpretation of Clement's *didaskalos* is subordinated to a belief that the role of Christ the *Lehrer* and *Seelenführer* was primarily to lead the human soul to salvation through a philosophical way of life. This path required a solid theoretical ground (faith and knowledge of God), as well as the training of the soul and the enactment of a holy life in praxis that imitated Christ's life. In this effect, Clement's culminating imperative was for each Christian who became an advanced gnostic and connoisseur of God ultimately to become a teacher and continue Christ's evangelical missionary call on earth:

The gnostic dignity is augmented and increased by him, who has undertaken the first place in the teaching of others, and received the dispensation by word and deed of the greatest good on earth, by which he mediates contact and fellowship with the divinity.⁸

This didaskalic imperative is extremely revealing as it clearly suggests that, according to Clement, the highest level of 'gnosticism' is not a mere abstract contemplation of God and elevated mediation detached from the material world that channels human escape from the matter.⁹ On the contrary, Clement grounds the human reality and identity in this world by necessitating the material dimension of the school and schooling, while at the same time through this pedagogical programme he connects humanity and the earthly church and school to the heavenly city of Jerusalem.

It was precisely from this point of view that Kovacs began her article on Clement's 'gnostic teacher' and 'divine pedagogy'.¹⁰ She agreed with André

⁷ Adolf Knauber, "Die patrologische Schätzung des Clemens von Alexandrien," in P. Granfield and J.A. Jungman (eds.), *Kyriakon. Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, vol. I (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), 289–293.

⁸ *Strom.* VII 52, 1: Πλείον δέ τι καὶ μάλλον ἐπιτείνει τὸ γνωστικὸν ἀξίωμα ὁ τὴν προστασίαν τῆς τῶν ἐτέρων διδασκαλίας ἀναλαβών, τοῦ μεγίστου ἐπὶ γῆς ἀγαθοῦ τὴν οἰκονομίαν λόγῳ τε καὶ ἔργῳ ἀναδεξάμενος, δι' ἧς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον συνάφειάν τε καὶ κοινωνίαν ἐμμεσιτεύει.

⁹ Such an 'escapist' argument that Clement's man or woman is "tiptoeing on the Earth" was made by John Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), 131–207, esp. 183–184 and 212–224.

¹⁰ Cf. Judith L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria," *J ECS* 9 (2001) 5–6.

Méhat that Clement's ideal Christian is not a 'solitary dreamer' but rather an active human agent whose life's aspiration is driven not only by the call to board the train to Paradise but also by the zeal to invite new passengers and to share his/her knowledge with them here on earth.¹¹ Kovacs also agreed with Méhat that Clement's perfect gnostic is an idealization of his teacher Pantaenus, as well as of his own life of a teacher. But most importantly, Kovacs emphasized that the true gnostic's achievement both as a teacher in school or church and a gnostic, who even on earth enters the heavenly realm of salvation, is made possible through his or her connection to the *logos*, whose image he or she bears from the creation of Adam and Eve.

Just like Knauber, van den Hoek, Guillaumont, Neymeyr, and Behr, Kovacs too is more interested in the anthropological implications of Clement's Christology than in the Christology *per se*. As a result, her image of the 'gnostic teacher' is grounded first and foremost in the Christian gnostic, who undergoes the Christian formation of character and spirit through a complex of 'general' and 'individual' pedagogical training and studies of Scriptures within the church's domain. Such training is part of God's divine plan for humanity (οἰκονομία). Her focus on the figure of Christ the *didaskalos* is as strong as it needs to be to inform her understanding of Clement's programme for his pupils. Nonetheless, Kovacs took the Christological significance of the divine *didaskalos* and distinguished the Christian teacher's dependence on the *logos* on both 'general' and 'individual' levels, a similar distinction to that made by Osborn in his treatment of the relation of the *logos* to humanity at large and each individual human being in particular.¹² This was done to emphasize the metaphysical, 'general' dimension of God's οἰκονομία that involves the totality of creation.¹³ But in the 'individual' dimension, the *logos*, who is the divine Teacher, forms each and every soul in his psychagogy (Neymeyr's *Seelenführung*), which consisted of general secular education (ἡ ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία) that prepared one for the advanced religious study of the Scriptures and divine mysteries of God.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid. 5. Cf. André Méhat, *Études sur les "Stromates" de Clément d'Alexandrie*. Patristica Sorbonensia 7 (Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 60 f. See also André Guillaumont, "Le Gnostique chez Clément d'Alexandrie et chez Évagre le Pontique," in *ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙΝΑ: Hellenisme, Judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie. Mélange offerts à Claude Mondésert* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987), 199.

¹² Eric F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), 38–53; *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 107–157.

¹³ Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," 7. Cf. *Strom.* VII 5, 3–6, 1.

¹⁴ Cf. *Protr.* 112, 1.

The several perspectives reviewed above are perhaps different in their approaches but similar in their general purpose of discerning and describing the educational programme Clement provided for his Christian and non-Christian audience. As noted previously, perhaps with the exception of Fascher's approach, their main underlying interest was in reconstructing the second-century church in Alexandria. Since the historiographical data on it are scarce, Clement's, and later Origen's, theological treatises became the main sources used to deduce the contours and essence of the community, structure and activity of the Alexandrian church. Again, only Fascher directly (and other scholars only indirectly) recognized the Christological significance of Clement's representation of Christ as a Pedagogue and Teacher. Such representation is revealed in the earthly mission of the *logos*, i.e. in a concretely structured community of school and church, as well as in the basic secular and advanced Christian religious education that leads to direct communication and unity with Christ, the Son of God.

In book seven of his *Stromateis*, Clement explains that God's Son has the nature "nearest to Him [God] who alone is the Almighty One"; it is "the most perfect, most holy, most potent, most princely, most kingly, and most beneficent."¹⁵ Precisely because of his noble identity, this same *logos* never ceased to care for humanity. In Clement's words, the *logos* "having assumed flesh, which by nature is susceptible to suffering, trained (ἐπαίδευσεν) it [*scil.* his soul] to the condition of impassibility."¹⁶ The *logos* instructed pupils according to everyone's capacity through discipline, hope for a better life, and through the holy mysteries of the incarnation, resurrection and eucharistic presence.¹⁷ Thus, Clement informed his pupils and readers that the development of character the *logos* offered to humanity was first and foremost tested on, and approved by, Christ, who, by assuming human flesh, healed human nature to its original state and thereby became a model for humanity and the Saviour of all people, both to those who believed in him and those yet to be introduced to the true faith.¹⁸ At the same time, Clement envisages a link between a virtuous life and gnosis, not in the sphere of human endeavours and abilities, not even in the schooling of the character (οὐδ' ἐκ παιδείας τῆς ἐγκυκλίου), but in spiritual obedience and in imitation of God and God's Son, who gives his grace, gnosis, and victory over temptation in

¹⁵ *Strom.* VII 5, 1–6.

¹⁶ *Strom.* VII 7, 5: ... ὅς γε καὶ τὴν σάρκα τὴν ἐμπαθὴ φύσει γενομένην ἀναλαβὼν εἰς ἕξιν ἀπαθείας ἐπαίδευσεν.

¹⁷ Cf. *Strom.* VII 6, 1. Cf. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," 7.

¹⁸ Cf. *Strom.* VII 7, 6 ff.

pursuit of righteousness.¹⁹ The art of education and care for the body finds its best realization when “it only prepares the soul and serves it.”²⁰ The rest is in the hands of the Saviour, who ennobles humanity with his grace.

The locus of human training and salvation takes place within the boundaries of the school through study, but it is intimately connected with the church, an integral part of which was the Christian school of Alexandria. Clement explicitly perceives himself as a member of one catholic church.²¹ At the end of the seventh book of his *Stromateis*, he deals with the question of the unity of the church. This unity, as in Ignatius of Antioch,²² derives from the unity of God, the unity of one Saviour, who is the Archpriest,²³ and thus the church must be one and single:

Therefore in substance and idea, in origin, in pre-eminence, we say that the ancient and catholic church is alone, collecting as it does into the unity of the one faith²⁴—which results from the peculiar Testaments, or rather the one Testament in different times by the will of the one God, through one Lord—those already ordained, whom God predestinated, knowing before the foundation of the world that they would be righteous.²⁵

About these predestined or ‘chosen out of the chosen’ (ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι) in the church, Clement says that the Scriptures endow them with different functions²⁶ and they can be called deacons, presbyters, and bishops. A threefold structure of the church hierarchy is frequently found in Clement, each rank having its own particularity and mission. Besides this, these three church ranks are intimately intertwined with each other not only for the reason that they serve the same cause of ministry in the ‘unity of faith,’ but also for the reason that they are in hierarchical interdependence:

Since, according to my opinion, the grades here in the church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory, and of that economy (οἰκονομία) which, the Scriptures say,²⁷ awaits those who, following the foot-

¹⁹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 19,4–20, 3.

²⁰ *Strom.* VII 19, 4. On Clement's theological use of agrarian language, see Denise K. Buell, *Making Christians. Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: University Press, 1999).

²¹ See *Strom.* VII 106, 1–108, 1. In *Strom.* VII 107, 3 Clement contends that “the true church, that which is really ancient, is one, and that in it those who according to God's purpose are just, are enrolled.”

²² Ignatius of Antioch, *Epist. ad Trallian.* 3.

²³ Cf. *Protr.* 120, 2; *Strom.* II 21, 4–5.

²⁴ Cf. Heb 4:13.

²⁵ *Strom.* VII 107, 5.

²⁶ See *Paed.* III 97, 2.

²⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 2:9.

steps of the apostles, have lived in perfection of righteousness according to the gospel. For these taken up in the clouds,²⁸ the apostle writes, will first minister [as deacons], then be classed in the presbyterate, by promotion in glory (for glory differs from glory) till they grow into a *perfect man*.²⁹

It is important here to note the successiveness of the ranks from deacon to presbyter, and thus to bishop. The allusion to Paul's letter to the Thessalonians gives the church hierarchy a certain eschatological tension, which is directed to growth and perfection. Incidentally, the Greek word used here for denoting 'rank' literally means *gradual moving forward* (προκοπᾶν) or, to be more precise, it is a gradual progress, meant here in a spiritual sense. This progress results in a growing authority that oversees the well-being of the Christian community. On the other hand, the realization of this progress finds its fulfillment in the ultimate transformation of the individual Christian into a 'perfect man.' 'The perfect man' is an allusion to the Ephesians, which Clement used when he described the uniting of the human will with God's will. The uniting with God happens simultaneously with the liberation from sin, which results in the ability to truly serve God in church.³⁰ The presbyter's duty is to teach, help, and correct, and the duty of the deacon is to assist the presbyter in his mission. Both are true gnostics.³¹ The deacon, the presbyter, and the bishop do angelic ministry, fulfill God's will, humbly teach not human wisdom but God's knowledge, and participate in the ministry of Christ's mysteries.³² In the latter we see the meaning of the advancement from the rank of a deacon to the rank of the presbyter and to further spiritual growth. From this they draw their righteousness and merited place not on earth but at the last judgment, at which they will sit on twenty-four thrones to judge the nations.³³

²⁸ Cf. 1 Thess 4:17.

²⁹ *Strom.* VI 107, 2–3. "Perfect men" is an allusion to Eph 4:13.

³⁰ See above note 27.

³¹ Cf. *Strom.* VII 3, 2–4.

³² On Clement's 'sacramentology' see Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's Appropriation of his Background* (Patristic Studies 5; New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 17–76; Ulrich Neymeyr, "Presbyteroi' bei Clemens von Alexandrien," *SP* 31 (1997) 493–496; Andrew L. Pratt, "Clement of Alexandria: Eucharist as Gnosis," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 32 (1987) 163–178; André Méhat, "Clement of Alexandria," in Willy Rordorf et al. (eds.), *The Eucharist of the Early Christians* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1978), 99–131; A.H.C. van Eijk, "Gospel of Philip and Clement of Alexandria: Gnostic and Ecclesiastical Theology on the Resurrection and the Eucharist," *VChr* 25 (1971) 94–120.

³³ Cf. *Strom.* VI 106, 2 with an allusion to Rev 4:4.

So was Clement a presbyter or a deacon, or not? With the title *μακάριος πρεσβύτερος*, rendered to him by Eusebius, Clement entered church tradition, and the later church fathers, such as the Cappadocians, Maximus the Confessor, John Damascene, and Photius, had no doubts about the fact that Clement was a local Alexandrian presbyter. One thing is certain, that Clement was a member of a specific congregation and church. And even if Clement did not provide any historical descriptions of Christian rituals and was interested in their allegorical, ethical, and spiritual explanations,³⁴ this does not exclude the possibility that he was also a presbyter. Clement inscribes the notion of ministry within the triad of the deacon-presbyter-bishop, although this triad, as we saw earlier, is part of the broader sacerdotal order which connects humanity with the invisible world. Alexander Golitzin has recently demonstrated that Clement preceded Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the description of the 'heavenly' and 'ecclesiastical' hierarchy, in which each rank has a clearly defined role in the transmission of the divine blessing and knowledge from the first source to each created being, in general, and each human person, in particular.³⁵

To sum up, book seven of Clement's *Stromateis* provides rich evidence of his integrated understanding of the early Christian school and church. Even though Neymeyr's and van den Hoek's arguments about Clement's non-sacerdotal status are persuasive, still the distance between the school and the church is almost non-existent in Clement's theological view. Education and personal growth are deepened and realized in sacramental initiation and eternal liturgy.

³⁴ See Herbert G. Marsh, "The Use of *μυστήριον* in the Writings of Clement of Alexandria with Special Reference to his Sacramental Doctrine," *JTS* 27 (1936) 64–80.

³⁵ In *Strom.* VI 107,2 and *Exc.* 27, 1–6 Clement corrected the Gnostic myth in the light of the traditions of the Jewish and Neoplatonist legacy and spoke of the 'heavenly hierarchy' (cosmic order), laying the foundation for Ps.-Dionysius. See Alexander Golitzin, *Et introibo ad altare Dei: The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita, with Special Reference to Its Predecessors in the Eastern Tradition* (Thessalonica: Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies, 1994), 265.

THE END OF *STROMATEIS* VII
AND CLEMENT'S LITERARY PROJECT*

Marco Rizzi

The exact meaning of the closing section of the seventh book of the *Stromateis* and its relationship with the rest of Clement's existing, projected, and lost writings has constituted one of the most debated topics among scholars since the beginnings of modern scholarship in the field of early Christian studies.¹ In this regard, it is enough to remember the late 19th- and early 20th-century debate between Adolf von Harnack and Otto Stählin, on the one hand, and Christian Bunsen and Theodor von Zahn, on the other, about the relative chronology of the *Stromateis* and the lost *Hypotyposeis* and their place within Clement's work. Harnack² and Stählin³ proposed the thesis according to which the *Hypotyposeis* were written by the young Clement, who later abandoned the heterodox theories advanced there; death prevented him from completing his *Stromateis*, in preparation for which he wrote some notes (the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* and the *Eclogae propheticae*). Bunsen⁴ and Zahn,⁵ instead, considered these last writings to be surviving fragments from the eighth book of the *Stromateis* or from the *Hypotyposeis*, which were both written by Clement at a mature age.

The problematic character of the end of the seventh book of the *Stromateis* emerges mainly from three pieces of information, two of them being internal to the book itself and the last coming from ancient sources and from the manuscript tradition. First of all, Clement declares his intention of

* I would like to thank Matyáš Havrda for his suggestions, which improved the form and contents of this paper.

¹ Here I follow the recent discussion by Bogdan G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (VChr Suppl. 95; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), 6–11.

² Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*, II.2, *Die Chronologie der Literatur von Irenaeus bis Eusebius* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), 18–20.

³ In the introduction to his edition of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, I, *Protrepticus und Paedagogus* (GCS 12; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905), XLII.

⁴ Christian Bunsen, *Analecta Antenicaena*, I, *Reliquiae literariae* (London 1854), 325–340.

⁵ Theodor von Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur*, III, *Supplementum Clementinum* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1884), 117–130.

solving some problems posed to Christians by Greek, Jewish, or Gnostic thinkers before passing to the next book, which, of course, would be the eighth in the series:

Since it comes next to reply to the objections alleged against us by the Greeks and the Jews, and since, in some of the questions previously discussed, the sects who also adhere to another teaching give their help, it will be best first to clear away the obstacles before us, and then, when we are thus prepared for the solution of the difficulties, to advance to the succeeding *Stromateus*.⁶

At the end of the book, however, Clement uses a different closing formula from the previous books: he indicates not only the number of the book that has just ended and the passage to another one, but adds the expression (never used before) “starting from another beginning” (ἀπ’ ἄλλης ἀρχῆς) with reference to the next book or section of the *Stromateis*:

And now, after this seventh *Stromateus* of ours, we shall give an account of what comes next, starting from another beginning.⁷

In this way, Clement seems to hint at the continuation of his work and at the same time at a sort of discontinuity within it.

When evaluating Clement’s assertions concerning the continuation of his work, we are confronted with a perplexing note by Eusebius of Caesarea, who in *Historia ecclesiastica* VI 13, 1–2 informs us that the Alexandrian master wrote eight books of the *Stromateis* and the same number of books of the *Hypotyposes*, thus inducing the conclusion that the book promised by Clement in the above-mentioned passages of *Stromateis* VII would be not only the eighth, but also the last in the series. Eusebius’ claim seems to be confirmed by Photius, who, more than five centuries later, affirms that he has read eight books of the *Hypotyposes* and as many of the *Stromateis*,⁸ and, on the other hand, by the very textual tradition, because the only manuscript which has preserved the *Stromateis* for us effectively contains an eighth book. But this eighth book is deeply different in content and style from the previous ones, so the situation puzzles modern scholars, who give very different answers to the question of whether it could be the original last

⁶ *Strom.* VII 89, 1. I follow the Greek text in Clément d’Alexandrie, *Stromate VII. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Alain Le Boulluec* (SC 428; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), and the English translation in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. II: *Fathers of the Second Century*, edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1885), revised where required.

⁷ *Strom.* VII 111, 4.

⁸ Photius, *Bibl.* 111.

book of Clement's work or not and—in the latter case—whether an eighth book really existed and what its contents were like.⁹

This last remark introduces another point at issue in the field of Clementine studies, a point which also affects the present paper: what about the hints at other themes of discussion which Clement displays many times in the course of the *Stromateis*? Were they treated in the last book of the *Stromateis* or did he discuss them in the *Hypotyposeis* and in his lost writings? The peculiar literary character of the *Stromateis*, apparently so disorganized and programmatically involute in style and form, makes the answer difficult and shows that the questions about the end of the seventh book are strictly interwoven with a more general evaluation of Clement's literary project and of his remaining writings.

After the Second World War, the thesis propounded by Bunsen and Zahn was reworked by André Méhat in his comprehensive study on the *Stromateis*: in his opinion, the *Hypotyposeis* followed after the *Stromateis*, gathering and developing the themes hinted at by Clement in the *Stromateis* and elsewhere, and representing the most advanced phase of his teaching.¹⁰ In the mid-'70s, on the basis of a close scrutiny of the manuscript L (*Laurentianus* V 3), which has transmitted the *Stromateis* along with the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* and the *Eclogae propheticae*, Pierre Nautin attributed to the very scribe of this codex the shortening of the original eighth book, by making a selection from it in the form of *excerpta* when he realized that the remaining space in his codex was not enough to contain all the remaining text.¹¹ His conclusions, questioned by some scholars such as Annewies van den Hoek¹² or Carlo Nardi,¹³ have instead been shared by others, including Alain Le Boulluec.¹⁴ Most recently, Andrew Itter considers the eighth book of the *Stromateis* as the culminating point of all Clement's writings, and links them all to the numerical speculation about the seven circuits and the nine pillars of inner and outer veils surrounding the Ark of the Covenant in the Jerusalem Temple, which Clement allegorizes in the fifth book of the

⁹ For a survey of some scholars' position about this issue, see *infra*, notes 11–16.

¹⁰ André Méhat, *Étude sur les 'Stromates' de Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 516 f.

¹¹ Pierre Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates* et les *Hypotyposes* de Clément d'Alexandrie," *VChr* 30 (1976) 268–302.

¹² Annewies van den Hoek in Clément d'Alexandrie, *Stromate IV* (SC 463, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2001), 13 f.

¹³ Carlo Nardi in Clemente Alessandrino, *Estratti profetici. Eclogae Propheticae* (Florence: EDB, 1985), 11.

¹⁴ Alain Le Boulluec in Clément d'Alexandrie, *Stromate V, II, Commentaire, bibliographie et index* (SC 279, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1981), 286–288.

Stromateis. So, after a complex theological and arithmetical puzzle, in Itter's view the soteriological sequence by which the faithful ascends to God and is saved constitutes a ten-step journey, which is reflected in the structure of Clement's work as well; the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus* correspond to its beginning as preliminary levels (outside the Temple, so to say), and the eight books of the *Stromateis* scan the degrees of Christian (or better Alexandrian Christian) esoteric teaching, culminating in the knowledge of the first principles (God and Christ), thanks to the logical inquiry whose rules are illustrated in the last book of Clement's major work.¹⁵ Bogdan Bucur's 'other Clement' moves along a similar path, but without any esoteric features; Bucur argues that the *Hypotyposeis*, along with the *Excerpta*, the *Eclogae*, and the *Adumbrationes*, represents the pinnacle of Clement's exposition of his doctrine.¹⁶

All the proposals mentioned above share the *communis opinio* according to which the *Stromateis* were divided into eight books by Clement himself and the *Hypotyposeis* constituted a different writing, even if the latter represent a continuation of the former and a conclusion of Clement's theological and literary project. The aim of my paper is to question both these assumptions and to propound a different solution to the literary and historical problems posed by the above-mentioned data. In doing so, I will develop an interpretation of Clement's work I sketched at the *Colloquium Origenianum Decimum* held in Krakow in September 2009.¹⁷ On that occasion, I tried to demonstrate that Clement did not intend to organize his literary career according to a threefold pattern, as assumed by most scholarship from Franz Overbeck onwards, on the basis of what I believe is an erroneous interpretation of Clement's *Paedagogus* I 3, 3; on the contrary, following an intuition advanced by Giuseppe Lazzati,¹⁸ I assume that Clement divided his work into two main ambits: the first one encompasses works such as the *Protrepticus*, the *Paedagogus*, and the *Quis dives salvetur*, which he addressed to a wide literary milieu and to a general audience, Christian or heathen, as it were; the second ambit was restricted to his scholastic activity and—as has been shown by many scholars, among whom I like to remember

¹⁵ Andrew C. Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (VChr Suppl. 97; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), 15–32.

¹⁶ Bogdan G. Bucur, "The place of the *Hypotyposeis* in the Clementine Corpus: An Apology for 'the Other Clement of Alexandria,'" *J ECS* 17 (2009) 313–335.

¹⁷ See Marco Rizzi, "The Literary Problem in Clement of Alexandria: A Reconsideration," *Adamantius* 17 (2011) 154–163.

¹⁸ Giuseppe Lazzati, *Introduzione allo studio di Clemente Alessandrino* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1939), 1–36.

Louis Roberts' insights¹⁹—generated a peculiar way of fixing his oral teachings in a written form, witnessed not only by *Stromateis* I–VII, but also by the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* or by the so-called eighth book of the *Stromateis*. In my opinion, such a distinction is confirmed by such a fine and skilled reader as Photius: on the basis of the great difference in style and contents he sharply opposes the *Paedagogus* and the *Protrepticus* to the *Stromateis* and the *Hypotyposeis*:

The *Paedagogus* is an elaborate work in three books, containing rules for behaviour and conduct. It was preceded by and combined with another work, in which he refutes the impiety of the heathen. These discourses have nothing in common with the *Hypotyposeis*, since they are entirely free from idle and blasphemous opinions. The style is florid, rising at times to an agreeable and moderate loftiness, while the display of learning is not inappropriate. [...] The *Stromateis*, in eight books, contain an attack upon heresy and the heathen. The material is arranged promiscuously and the chapters are not in order [...]. The work in some parts is unsound, but not like the *Hypotyposeis* [...],

about which he has said before:

These monstrous blasphemies are contained in eight books, in which he frequently discusses the same points and quotes passages from Scripture promiscuously and confusedly, like one possessed.²⁰

It is remarkable that Photius notices the affinity between the *Stromateis* and the *Hypotyposeis* in terms of both style and the (confused) organization of the arguments, while he observes the difference in their contents: the latter are full of heretical doctrines, whereas he finds only a limited number of fallacious ideas in the former. Moreover, the difference between the two works, according to Photius, consists in the accentuated exegetical traits of the *Hypotyposeis*, where various passages from throughout the Bible are briefly commented on and which, surprisingly, end with the explanation of the *Ecclesiastes*:

The *Hypotyposeis* contain a brief explanation and interpretation of certain passages in the Old and New Testaments. Although in some cases what he says appears orthodox, in others he indulges in impious and legendary fables. [...] The entire work includes notes on *Genesis*, *Exodus*, the *Psalms*, St. Paul's Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, and *Ecclesiastes*. Clement was a pupil of Pantaenus, as he himself says.²¹

¹⁹ Louis Roberts, "The Literary Form of the *Stromateis*," *The Second Century* 1 (1981) 211–222.

²⁰ Photius, *Bibl.* 110 f., 109.

²¹ Photius, *Bibl.* 109.

At this point, one can wonder whether the *Stromateis* and the *Hypotyposeis* were really intended by Clement as two distinct and separated writings or whether their division into two was caused by other circumstances. Let us recall that both of these writings belonged to the scholastic ambit of Clement's literary activity, that they both addressed the same restricted audience (his pupils and highly educated Christian fellows) in a mixed context where the oral interaction between the teacher and his pupils played a relevant role (as in the case of Plotinus' *Enneades*, before Porphyry edited them), and that the latter had to contain all the theological and exegetical topics Clement announced but did not deal with in the seven books of his *Stromateis*, topics which could not be fully developed in the narrow boundaries of just one book, the eighth of the series; if we take all these points into consideration, it strikes us as strange that Clement would finish his *Stromateis* by interrupting his teachings to start a new work which would nevertheless fulfil their plans in the very same style and character, but under another title.

This doubt may be further supported by two arguments. As already noted by Méhat, Clement does not quote or hint at any of his writings with the title *Hypotyposeis* (plural) or *Hypotyposis* (singular), while he mentions his *Stromateis* (in the singular or in the plural form) and his other works, whether they survived or were lost, many times. Moreover—as Méhat observes—Clement directly connects the words στρώμα and ὑποτύπωσις in *Stromateis* VI 2, 1 (στρωματέων ὑποτύπωσις); but he often also uses the term ὑποτύπωσις as a synonym for ὑπόμνημα, which is commonly used (not only by Clement) to indicate the literary genre of the scholastic treatment of different topics; in *Stromateis* I 16, 1 we find the expression ὑποτύπωσις ὑπομνημάτων, which exactly parallels *Stromateis* VI 2, 1. So, the existence of a work entitled *Hypotyposeis* rests only on Eusebius' and Photius' witness. I shall come back to this point after dealing with a second argument for my assumption, which consists of a closer examination of the end of book seven.

Far from being an uncommon or even an enigmatic statement (as suggested by Giovanni Pini²² and in the very same words by Domingo Mayor²³) or a reference to the treatment of the philosophical theme of the ἀρχαί

²² Giovanni Pini in Clemente di Alessandria, *Gli Stromati. Note di vera filosofia* (Milan: Paoline, 2006), 824 n. 13.

²³ Domingo Mayor in Clemente Alejandrino, *Stromatéis. Memorias gnósticas de verdadera filosofía* (Santo Domingo de Silos: Abadía de Silos, 1993), 638 n. 556.

(along the lines of Origen's *De principiis*) and to the exegesis of the *Genesis*, the phrase 'starting from another beginning' is a common formula used in ancient scholastic literature to mark the end of one book and the passage to another one, or a shift from one argument to another within the same work. We can find the best example in Sextus Empiricus' *corpus* of writings, which, in addition, bear many traits similar to Clement's *Stromateis*: the former and the latter pertain to a scholastic milieu; both are defined as *hypomnemata* by their own authors; moreover, one of Sextus' writings is titled *Hypotyposeis: Skeptikai* (or *Pyrrhonikai*) *hypotyposeis*, i.e. *Sceptical Sketches* or *Outlines of Pyrronism*. So, Sextus uses the expression 'starting from another beginning' to mark the end of one book and the beginning of a new one with apt formulae, as also Clement frequently does in more varied ways (this being a very common feature in ancient literature until the third century as a result of the limits imposed by the material structure of the writing support, the *volumen*, which had a predefined and standard size); unlike Clement, who often uses extensive prologues and final summaries in individual books, Sextus chooses more stereotyped expressions and the quoted formula recurs many times in his works. In particular, Sextus employs this formula to mark the end of each of the first six books of *Adversus mathematicos*, with the exception of book three (which might originally have been united with the short book four), and the closing lines of books seven and nine (but modern scholarship assumes that the second half of the writing probably belonged to a different work and was added to the first six books in the course of the manuscript tradition²⁴). So, in Sextus' *usus scribendi* 'another beginning' indicates the passage from one book to another, as in *Adversus mathematicos* I–VI, or to a new argument within a discussion about the same general topic, as in the case of the passages from book seven to eight and from book nine to ten, where Sextus criticizes logicians and physicists, respectively.²⁵

Clement's use of the formula in *Strom.* VII 111, 4 can be convincingly explained against this background. It is preceded by a large conclusive summary, which goes from *Strom.* VII 110, 4 to the end. Clement affirms that he has finished the 'ethical discourse' started in book four and reasserts the zetetic and scholastic character of his *Stromateis*, with a clear parallel to the opening section of book four, where he dwelt on similar considerations and

²⁴ On the transmission of Sextus' text, see Luciano Floridi, *Sextus Empiricus: The Transmission and Recovery of Pyrrhonism* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 8–11.

²⁵ We can observe similar features in Galen's writings too.

employed the same bucolic metaphor.²⁶ Moreover, at the beginning of book six, Clement explicitly indicates that there is a close connection between books six and seven, which constitute a unified whole; in this way, he shows full awareness of the space required for the development of his argument at this point of the *Stromateis*. So, when we take into account Clement's preview of his future plans in VII 89, 1, the short conclusive summary of VII 110, 4–111, 3, and the scholastic formula of VII 111, 4, we come to the conclusion that the end of *Stromateis* VII does not mark only a passage to another book, but that it also marks a major dividing line within the whole of the work as planned by Clement. If my argument is correct, the *Stromateis* would have continued with a new section, presumably of a comparable length, dealing with some or even all of the topics which Clement hinted at throughout the preceding books.

It is now time to go back to Photius' testimony. He had in his hands two different classes of manuscripts containing Clement's *Stromateis*; both were identical until the seventh book, but they diverged after it: on the one hand, Photius read the same text we now possess as the eighth book in the only codex which has preserved Clement's *Stromateis* for us; but in other copies Photius found the very text of the *Quis dives salvetur*.²⁷ Since Photius also speaks of an old codex (πάλαιον βιβλίον), without specifying to what class of manuscripts it belonged,²⁸ his report testifies that very soon the manuscript tradition bifurcated at the end of *Stromateis* VII; thus, we can infer that scribes tried to adapt their copies to the description of the number of books of the *Stromateis* made by Eusebius in his *Historia ecclesiastica* by copying as an eighth book other texts attributed to Clement. Evidently, they did not have at their disposal any complete antigraph from which they could copy the full text or what they supposed was the full text in eight books.²⁹

²⁶ It is worth noting that at the end of book three, Clement admits that the discussion against some Gnostic doctrines drove him out of the spaces he projected for his exposition.

²⁷ "The first seven books have the same title, and are identical in all the copies. The title of the eighth, however, varies, as does the subject matter. In some copies it is called *Who is the Rich Man that is saved?* and begins, 'Those who ... laudatory speeches,' etc.; in others it is called *The Miscellanies, the eighth book*, like the other seven, and begins, 'But not even the oldest of the philosophers,' etc." (Photius, *Bibl.* 111).

²⁸ "In an old copy I have found the title of this work not only given as *Miscellanies*, but in full as follows: *Miscellany of gnostic notes according to the true philosophy, books I–VIII*" (ibid.).

²⁹ These considerations make Nautin's proposal, according to which the actual eighth book results from a series of excerpts made by a scribe from its original—and longer—text, highly unsatisfactory, because such a hypothesis does not explain the different situation of the other branch of the manuscript tradition witnessed by Photius.

A possible explanation of this situation is that the original eighth book was lost during the crucial phase of the transposition of the text from the volumen format into the codex form, a process which has been investigated in detail by modern philologists who describe many cases in which one or more books were lost.³⁰ Any time between Eusebius and the 'old codex' quoted by Photius, the *Stromateis* could have suffered the same fate, losing their eighth book and their original conclusion. But we can go a step further. Indeed, as is well known, the passage from volumen to codex affected the handing down of ancient texts in many ways, not least by subdividing the longest among them and grouping the resulting parts into codices of the same size and number of books; this was the case, for instance, with most historical works, which have been preserved in pentads or decads.³¹ Once this happened, in many cases the different sets of books fared differently; as a result, not only were parts of the original work lost, but sometimes scribes were compelled to assemble other parts of the authors' work to complete the text, as we have seen in the case of the manuscripts containing the *Quis dives salvetur* quoted by Photius. This is also the fate, for instance, of Sextus Empiricus' writings. As mentioned above, we now possess a work with the title *Adversus mathematicos*, transmitted to us by the manuscript tradition as a single writing divided into eleven books. But a mere glance at their contents shows that books seven to eleven are not a continuation of the preceding six books, because the later books are often quoted in the earlier ones as an already published work. Since Diogenes Laertius informs us about a work in ten books by Sextus, to a part of which our actual books *Adversus mathematicos* VII–XI correspond, it is reasonable to infer that the original work was divided during the course of its passage from volumen to codex into two pentads, one of which was lost and the other reassembled with another writing by Sextus in order to reconstitute a unity corresponding more or less to Diogenes' witness.³²

By analogy, it may be not a hasty hypothesis to suppose that Clement did not write two different scholastic works, the *Stromateis* and the *Hypotyposeis*; instead, he may have recorded his oral teachings in one miscellany of

³⁰ On this topic, see for instance Luciano Canfora, *Conservazione e perdita dei classici* (Padua: Antenore, 1974), esp. 17–24.

³¹ Canfora, *Conservazione*, 25–28.

³² It is doubtful whether the original division of the first half of *Adversus mathematicos* was into six or five books: see Floridi, *Sextus*, 10 f. (see note 24 above); probably, a Byzantine scribe divided the original book (which occupied an entire *volumen*) into two parts, according to the different contents.

notes consisting of fifteen books, which were divided into two groups in the course of their transcription from volumina to codices on the basis of both parts being of a similar length and/or because of the change in argument and contents, which, as we have seen above, Clement himself reflects at the end of book seven. Thus divided, the two parts soon acquired an independent life—as in the case of Sextus Empiricus' works—and in this way they reached Eusebius, who was not able to recognize the original unity of the writing any longer. To support this hypothesis, it is worth noting that the end of book two of the *Stromateis* shows that Clement was most probably writing (or dictating) on a volumen:

Let us conclude (περιγεγράφω) this second book of the *Stromateis* at this point, on account of the length and number of the chapters (διὰ τὸ μήκος τε καὶ πλῆθος τῶν κεφαλαίων).³³

While a preference for codices has normally been imputed to Christians since earliest times, the use of the volumen format in the course of the second and third centuries is witnessed by two fragments from Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* and one from the *Pastor Hermæ*, of course in addition to a great number of fragments from Biblical texts. At the same time, we possess many fragments from papyrus codices dating from the same period, among which there is also a fragment from Origen's homilies on Luke and in two other cases fragments that are perhaps from Clement's and Origen's lost works.³⁴ So we can suppose that the passage of the *Stromateis* from the original volumen format to the codex format took place as early as in the third century and that Eusebius saw Clement's writing in this condition.

By considering the way in which ancient scribes and librarians worked, we can also give a plausible explanation of the different titles under which the two sections circulated. Once again, Photius informs us that the exact title of the *Stromateis* may vary in the manuscripts from the simplest "*Stromateis*" to the most complete and most ancient (as it appears in the above-cited 'old manuscript') "of Clement, Alexandrian presbyter, books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of *Stromateis* of gnostic notes according to the true philosophy (τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀληθῆ φιλοσοφίαν γνωστικῶν ὑπομνημάτων στρωματέων)."

³³ *Strom.* II 147, 5. This formula is very close to that one we find at the end of Galen's *De usu partium*, book XII.

³⁴ The quoted papyri are those numbered 671 and 672 (Irenaeus), 662 (*Pastor Hermæ*), 688 (Origen on Luke), 636 (Clement's lost writing in codex format), 691 (Origen's lost writing in codex format), in J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976).

Understandably, in the course of the textual tradition the title came to be simplified into *στρωματεῖς*, plural, or *στρωματεύς*, singular, since at the beginning of his note Photius uses this latter form to indicate Clement's writing. We may suppose that another scribe or librarian, holding the second and now independent part of Clement's work in his hands, read an expression analogous to those in *Strom.* I 16, 1 (ὑποτύπωσις ὑπομνημάτων) or VI 2, 1 (στρωματέων ὑποτύπωσις) and used the term ὑποτύπωσις to label the whole text, thus creating a new work Clement never knew he had composed.

To be sure, Eusebius tells us that the *Stromateis* (as well as the *Hypotyposeis*) were divided into eight books, but his information does not always turn out to be reliable; moreover, we have no clear evidence that he read both works himself, either in Pamphilus' library in Caesarea or in the bishop's library in Jerusalem; instead, he could have been informed by a different source, perhaps Pamphilus himself.³⁵ Alternatively, Eusebius might have read the end of book seven and deduced that one book was lost, without understanding that the work continued in what he took for a different writing.

In the light of these considerations, I propose that the *Hypotyposeis* represent the last part of Clement's written teaching, which originally constituted a whole, both in terms of contents and literary form. What consequences does this have for our understanding of Clement's theological and literary effort? The majority of scholars share the conviction, albeit with some nuances, that Clement organized his teaching according to the threefold pattern of logic, ethic, and (meta)physic, as was common in contemporary Platonism; for instance, scholars discuss whether the last part may be identified with the 'true gnostic physiology,' with the ἐπόπτεια or with a more traditional theological treatise;³⁶ most of the themes announced by Clement in the course of the *Stromateis* and elsewhere³⁷ seem to belong to the third part of the division. In a previous work of mine, I proposed that Clement

³⁵ Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates*," 300 (see note 11 above) reaches the same conclusion; moreover, ancient scribes and librarians show a tendency to complete the numbering of books according to stylized patterns, as shown, for instance, by the case of Arnobius' seven books *Adversus gentes*, to which another one was added as an eighth book—Minucius Felix' *Octavius*!

³⁶ On this topic, see Laura Rizzerio, *Clemente di Alessandria e la "Physiologia veramente gnostica."* Saggio sulle origini e le implicazioni di un'epistemologia e di un'ontologia "cristiane" (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), esp. 181–215.

³⁷ For example, the discourse on the ἀρχαὶ καὶ θεολογία hinted at in *Quis dives* 26, 8.

does effectively use a ternary pattern, but moulds it according to the three virtues from the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, chapter 13 (faith, hope, and love): let us remember that they are mentioned immediately after Paul's statement that "now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Cor 13:12). This enables Clement to rework the ternary schemes developed by ancient philosophical schools according to a strictly Biblical and Christian pattern. So the organizing principle of Clement's teaching lies in a peculiar exegetical combination of 1 Cor 13, in its double aspects of the vision *per speculum et in aenigmate* and of the hierarchical scansion of the virtues, with the Johannine tradition according to which God is ἀγάπη, love. In this scheme, basing himself on faith, the Christian lives in hope, and his τέλος, end and perfection at the same time, is ἀγάπη. It is a question of a gnoseological programme, because its ultimate aim is the vision of God, and at the same time of a spiritual life, according to a progression in the Pauline virtues, in which the fullness of the virtues and their absorption into the divine ἀγάπη corresponds to the fullness of contemplation.³⁸

In this paper I do not wish to dwell on this point, for the demonstration of which the reader may be referred to the studies quoted above. It is only worth noting that what we know about the *Hypotyposes* fits well into this scheme: in the first seven books of the *Stromateis* Clement has treated faith and hope, or, according to the philosophical vocabulary, logic and ethic; now, after declaring at the end of book seven that he has finished the ethical argument, it remains to discuss the subject matter of the third part, namely God himself, or the theological discourse or the discourse about the ἀρχαί, or, in Pauline terms, Love. But how can man speak about God? Only by means of an exegesis of God's self-revelation, the Bible: of course, Clement must organize his teaching around a more systematic exegesis, starting from *Genesis*, without refraining, at the same time, from those speculative digressions which so much irritated the pious Photius—a way of writing best known from Origen's exegetical commentaries. A full demonstration of this point would exceed the space at our disposal. But I would like to make a final observation. In his note, Photius quotes a strange detail which, if true, indicates that Clement concluded his entire work and his very teaching with

³⁸ Rizzi, "Il fondamento epistemologico della mistica in Clemente Alessandrino," in L.F. Pizzolato and M. Rizzi (eds.), *Origene maestro di vita spirituale—Origen Master of Spiritual Life* (SPM 22; Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2001), 91–122. See also Rizzi, "Unity of the Symbolic Domain in Clement of Alexandria's Thought," in *SP* 41 (2006) 247–252; and my introduction to Clemente di Alessandria, *Gli stromati*, XVII–XXIX (see note 22 above).

the exegesis of the *Qohelet*. At first sight, it seems to be a mere oddity. But let us read the last words of the biblical book:

Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd. Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.³⁹

We may wonder whether anyone could find a better (and so cleverly self-ironic) epigraph not only for the major work of such a teacher and writer as Clement was, but also for his entire Christian witness.

³⁹ Eccl 12:9–14.

APPENDICES

‘HYMN OF THE HOLY CLEMENT TO CHRIST THE SAVIOUR’.
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *PEDAGOGUE* III 101, 4*

Annewies van den Hoek

INTRODUCTION

The most important manuscript of the *Pedagogue* (and of its predecessor, the *Protrepticus*) is the famous ‘Arethas Codex’ in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Codex Paris. graec. 451).¹ This codex was copied in 914 by Baanes at the request of bishop Arethas of Caesarea in Capadocea. The codex is incomplete since forty folia at the beginning of the first book and the hymn at the end of the third book are missing.² The most important copies of the Arethas codex are a 10th or 11th century codex now in Modena (Codex Mut. graec. III D 7, no. 126) and a 12th century codex in the Laurenziana in Florence (Codex Laur. graec. V 24). They do show the hymn, and even include a second hymn, which was presumably composed by Arethas himself and directed to the *Pedagogue*.³

The *Pedagogue*, and thus the hymn that occurs at the end of book three and concludes the work, dates from about 190 AD and was originally written in Greek in Alexandria, Egypt. The major critical edition is by Otto Stählin in the Corpus of Berlin.⁴ The works of Clement have been translated into many modern languages.⁵ The first English translation of the *Pedagogue* was made by William Wilson and published in the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. 4

* This Appendix, in a slightly different form, first appeared in *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Mark Kiley (London: Routledge, 1997), 296–303.

¹ For a description, see the editio major in the Corpus of Berlin: *Protrepticus und Paedagogus*, ed. Otto Stählin, rev. Ursula Treu (GCS 12; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 31972), XVI–XXXIX.

² The text begins at *Paed.* I 96, 1.

³ As suggested by Otto Stählin in Clemens von Alexandria, *Mahnrede an die Heiden. Der Erzieher*, übersetzt von Otto Stählin (BKV 2/7; München: Kösel & Pustet, 1934), 26.

⁴ See above, note 1.

⁵ For a listing of translations, see Michael Lattke, *Hymnus. Materialien zu einer Geschichte der antiken Hymnologie* (Freiburg i.d. Schweiz/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 278–281.

(1868), which was reprinted in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2 (1885).⁶ The editors felt obliged to expand the original text of the hymn in order to conform to the contemporary conception of poetry, which required rhyme.⁷ A more recent translation was made by Simon P. Wood in the series of the *Fathers of the Church*, vol. 23 (1954); again in this case the hymn was treated freely.⁸ Other translations can be found hidden in books on hymns, liturgy, or art history; among them is a translation that is both accurate and poetic in the English edition of F. van der Meer and Christine Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Christian World*, London, 1958, p. 45, translated by Mary F. Hedlund and H.H. Rowley.⁹

The French edition of the *Pédagogie* in Sources Chrétiennes is indispensable for the study of this work.¹⁰ The translation of the hymn is by Claude Mondésert and Chantal Matray with many important notes by Henri-Irénée Marrou. The German translation of Otto Stählin in the *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*,¹¹ based on his Greek text in *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller*,¹² is reliable and straightforward. Several translations of the *Pédagogie* exist in Italian.¹³

The hymn does not quote any specific biblical texts, but some of the images, such as the good shepherd, the fisherman, the way, and the light, can be associated with gospel texts. The echoes of Greek literature, particu-

⁶ William Lindsay Alexander helped with the poetical translations of the hymns, see ANF 2, 169.

⁷ ANF 2, 295 n. 5. A literal translation is paired with the poetic translation, see *ibid.* 296.

⁸ See *ibid.* 276 n. 70.

⁹ This work was originally published in Dutch in 1951. The English translation appeared seven years later.

¹⁰ *Le Pédagogie* I, ed., intro., and notes Henri-Irénée Marrou, trans. Marguerite Harl (SC 70; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1960); *Le Pédagogie* II, ed. and trans. Claude Mondésert, notes Henri-Irénée Marrou (SC 108; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1965); *Le Pédagogie* III, ed. and trans. Claude Mondésert and Chantal Matray, notes Henri-Irénée Marrou and Jean Irigoien (SC 158; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1970).

¹¹ Clemens von Alexandria, *Mahnrede an die Heiden. Der Erzieher, Buch I*, trans. Otto Stählin (BKV 2/7; München: Kösel & Pustet, 1934); *Der Erzieher, Buch II–III*, trans. Otto Stählin (BKV 2/8; München: Kösel & Pustet, 1934).

¹² *Protrepticus und Paedagogus*, ed. Otto Stählin, rev. Ursula Treu (GCS 12; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972).

¹³ *Il Pedagogio di Clemente Alessandrino*, trans. Ermanno Neri (I classici cristiani; Siena: Cantagalli, 1928); Clemente Alessandrino, *Il Pedagogio*, ed., trans., intro., and notes Abele Boatti (Corona patrum salesiana, ser. graeca 2; Turin: Società editrice internazionale, 1937, 1953); Clemente Alessandrino, *Il protrettico. Il pedagogio*, trans. Maria Grazia Bianco (Turin: UTET, 1971); Clemente Alessandrino, *Il pedagogio*, trans. Dag Tessoro (Rome: Città nuova, 2005).

larly poetry,¹⁴ are far more evident than biblical references. Clement himself tries to be poetic; the meter consists of an anapestic monometer with alterations.¹⁵ Clement goes out of his way to write in a style of earlier times, which makes his poem rather artificial. He had treated some of these themes in his prose, but in the hymn he occasionally substitutes more poetic words for his usual vocabulary, and at times, he even forges new words.

Scholars have been intrigued by the relationship between his imagery and early Christian art of the third and fourth centuries. The good shepherd, the shepherd milking,¹⁶ the shepherd-teacher, are all familiar from catacomb painting, mosaics and sarcophagi, as Frits van der Meer has shown in his *Atlas*.¹⁷ Van der Meer did not include the (at the time) newly excavated mosaics from the burial chamber underneath the Constantinian church of St. Peter in the Vatican.¹⁸ These mosaics give a vivid illustration of Clement's hymn, since they depict a good shepherd, a fisherman catching fish, and a Helios, an emblem of light whose rays form a T-shaped cross. In the mosaic, a Jonah, who is not mentioned in Clement's hymn, gives the whole setting a Christian and biblical signature. These and other depictions show that Clement's poetic creation was not an isolated phenomenon, but was embedded in a cultural context. Like the painted and sculptural images, Clement's hymn may also reflect liturgical customs. His language is not as clear and descriptive as, for example, that of Justin in his discussion of baptism and eucharist,¹⁹ but reminiscences of the sacraments are certainly present in his hymn.

The authenticity of the hymn has been questioned from time to time, primarily because of its absence from the Arethas Codex. There is, however, no serious reason to doubt that the work is Clement's. As will be shown in the notes, many of the characteristic words and images found in the *Protrepticus* and the earlier parts of the *Pedagogue* recur in the hymn. In addition, the three preceding chapters lead up to the final hymn in a natural way.²⁰

¹⁴ Many words are related to vocabulary of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Pindar, Menander, and Callimachus.

¹⁵ See Stählin, *Mahnrede* (BKV 7), 26; H.-I. Marrou and J. Irigoin in *Le Pédagogue* III (SC 158), 204–207.

¹⁶ For a literary comparison, see the *Passio of Perpetua and Felicitas* 4, 8–9.

¹⁷ Frits van der Meer and Christine Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World* (London: Nelson, 1958), 44f.

¹⁸ Mausoleum M of the Julii. See Engelbert Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1959), 36–42.

¹⁹ Justin, 1 *Apol* 61, 66–67.

²⁰ See particularly *Paed.* III 101, 3.

A profound knowledge of classical literature is also apparent in the hymn, and Clement's prose output is similarly learned. His works contain literally thousands of quotations from a vast range of Greek literature. There have been speculations about the practical function of the hymn as a song for the Alexandrian Christian community to which Clement belonged.²¹ Nothing can be proven about any liturgical function, and the hymn does not seem to have had much celebrity, since it is not quoted or even echoed by other ancient writers. In a way, it seems to be more famous with modern art historians than ancient authors. The only possible citation turns up in the fifth century AD author Nonnus;²² in a poem describing the apostles, he uses the two words "fisher of men," with "men" in the rare Homeric format employed by Clement.²³

In theological terms, the hymn sums up the main elements of the preceding books of the *Pedagogue*. The Logos or Christ functions as a pedagogue, whose task it is to instruct children and to improve their souls. The audience no longer consists of outsiders, as in the *Protrepticus*, but clearly of those who are baptized. They are all considered children of God and are not distinguished by age or rank. The children are cherished and fed with products such as milk, but the pedagogue can also administer bitter food whenever it is necessary to save their souls. While the first book of the *Pedagogue* deals with ethical issues in a general and theoretical way, books two and three discuss particular problems of daily life.

²¹ This is suggested by Stählin in *Mahnrede* (BKV 7), 26.

²² As already noticed by Stählin, *Erzieher* (BKV 8), 222 n. 1; a search on the TLG does not provide any more evidence.

²³ See below, line 23 of the hymn and note 40.

HYMN TO CHRIST THE SAVIOUR*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Στόμιον πώλων ἀδαῶν,
 πτερὸν ὀρνίθων ἀπλανῶν,
 οἶαξ νηῶν ἀτρεκῆς,
 ποιμὴν ἀρνῶν βασιλικῶν·</p> <p>5 τοὺς σοὺς ἀφελεῖς
 παῖδας ἄγειρον,
 αἰνεῖν ἀγίως,
 ὑμνεῖν ἀδόλως
 ἀκάκοις στόμασιν</p> <p>10 παιδῶν ἡγήτορα Χριστόν.
 Βασιλεὺ ἀγίων,
 λόγε πανδαμάτωρ
 πατρὸς ὑψίστου,
 σοφίας πρύτανι,</p> | <p>Bridle of untamed foals,²⁴
 wing of unerring birds,²⁵
 unwavering helm of ships,²⁶
 shepherd of royal lambs,²⁷</p> <p>gather your
 artless children²⁸
 to sing in a holy way
 and give unfeigned praise²⁹
 with unsullied lips³⁰</p> <p>to Christ, the children's guide.³¹
 King of saints,
 all-taming word³²
 of the highest Father,³³
 ruler of wisdom,³⁴</p> |
|--|--|

* Translation and notes by Annewies van den Hoek. The Greek text is that of Claude Mondésert and Chantal Matray, Clément d'Alexandrie, *Le Pédagogue* III (SC 158; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1970).

²⁴ Clement uses many poetic words that start with an 'alpha privans.' The translation given here tries to reflect this as much as possible. For 'bridle,' see *Paed.* II 33, 1; 92, 3, but in *Paed.* III 99, 2 the more prosaic word χαλινός is used. The word 'untamed' (ἀδαής) occurs only here in Clement's works. For the frisky 'foals,' see *Paed.* I 15.

²⁵ The 'wing' is used as image for the ascension to God, see line 21 where Clement speaks of the 'heavenly wing.' Plato's *Phaedrus* (246bc), to which Clement refers on several occasions, may be the background for this image. 'Unerring' (ἀπλάνης) is a word often used in ancient astronomy for fixed stars.

²⁶ 'Ships' (νηῶν) is a conjecture because of meter and content; the mss. have 'children' (νηπίων).

²⁷ In *Paed.* I 14, 4 it is explained that two different words for 'lamb' exist: ἀμνός for Christ and ἀρνήν, as here, for the Christians. For Christ as 'king,' see *Strom.* II 18, 3, and lines 11, 31, and 56 (trans. 55) of the hymn.

²⁸ The simplicity and innocence of the children is one of the central themes of the *Pedagogue*, see *Paed.* I 11, 2; 12, 1; 14, 2, 15, 1–2; 17, 1. The gathering evokes a chorus, a word that appears at the end of the hymn (see line 62).

²⁹ Possibly influenced by 1 Peter 2:2 (Isa 53:9).

³⁰ See *Paed.* I 14, 2–3.

³¹ A play on words, παιδῶν ἡγήτωρ instead of παιδ-αγωγός.

³² 'All-taming' (πανδαμάτωρ) is a homeric word used for Hypnos or Sleep, see *Il.* XXIV 5; *Od.* IX 373; the latter verse is quoted by Clement in *Strom.* VI 26, 2. This is the only passage in all of Greek (and Christian) literature where the logos receives this epithet. The biblical parallel is παντοκράτωρ, a word that is very frequent in Clement.

³³ 'Highest' is a traditional epithet for Zeus. 'Hypsistos' is often applied to various native gods in Asia minor and Syria; it also entered Hellenistic Judaism. Only here in Clement's works is it combined with the Father.

³⁴ 'Ruler' (πρύτανις) is a royal title often applied by poets to Zeus. Clement uses it only here.

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 15 | στήριγμα πόνων
αἰωνοχαρές,
βροτέας γενεᾶς
σῶτερ Ἰησοῦ,
ποιμὴν, ἀροτῆρ, | ever joyful support ³⁵
for the mortal race ³⁶
in toil and pain.
Saviour Jesus, ³⁷
shepherd, ploughman, ³⁸ |
| 20 | οἶαξ, στόμιον,
πτερόν οὐράνιον
παναγοῦς ποιμένης,
ἀλλεὺ μερόπων
τῶν σωζομένων | helm, bridle,
heavenly wing,
of the most holy flock, ³⁹
fisher of men, ⁴⁰
of those saved |
| 25 | πελάγους κακίας,
ἰχθὺς ἀγνοῦς
κύματος ἐχθροῦ
γλυκερῇ ζωῇ δελεάζων.
Προβάτων λογικῶν | from the sea of evil, ⁴¹
luring with sweet life ⁴²
the chaste fish
from the hostile tide.
Holy shepherd |
| 30 | ποιμὴν ἁγίε,
ἡγοῦ, βασιλεῦ
παίδων ἀνεπάφων·
ἵχνια Χριστοῦ | of sheep of the logos, ⁴³
lead, o king, ⁴⁴
the unharmed children; ⁴⁵
the footprints of Christ, |

³⁵ 'Ever joyful' is a hapax legomenon, invented by Clement for the occasion. 'Support' (στήριγμα) only occurs here in Clement, but see also Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* III 15, 8. The verbal equivalent (στηρίζω) is biblical.

³⁶ 'Mortal' (βροτέος) is a homeric word that Clement uses only here. More common is βρότειος, see *Strom.* III 23, 2 (in a quotation from Euripides).

³⁷ As most of the epithets in this hymn 'Saviour' is familiar from both pagan and Christian contexts.

³⁸ In this passage Clements takes up the titles of Christ he had used at the beginning and adds new titles, such as ploughman and fisherman. The 'good shepherd' occurs often in early Christian art, but the image is not necessarily always Christian.

³⁹ The image of the flock obviously relates to the 'shepherd' three lines earlier. 'Most holy' (παναγής) is a poetic word that Clement uses only here; in his prose text he has the more usual term πανάγιος, see *Paed.* I 84, 1.

⁴⁰ For 'men' a homeric word (μέροψ) is used instead of the more customary ἄνθρωπος. In the Gospel story (Matt 4:18f. and par.) the phrase 'fisher(s) of men' refers to the apostles and not to Christ, which makes the image here unusual. Origen applies the phrase to the apostles in one of his sermons, but with the word ἄνθρωπος, see *Hom. in Jer.* 16, 1 (GCS 6: 132, 10). Nonnus parallels Clement's phrasing, which may indicate that he quotes Clement, but he too applies the words to the apostles (*Paraphrasis sancti evangelii Joannei*, Demonstratio 1, 149 Scheindler). Clement's image apparently did not find many literary followers, but it may have a connection with early Christian art (see introduction).

⁴¹ This probably refers to baptism.

⁴² 'Sweet' (γλυκερός) is a poetic word, which recurs in line 44.

⁴³ The word λογικός has a double meaning, both referring to the rational capacities of the believers and to the Logos, namely Christ.

⁴⁴ Christ as 'king' has biblical overtones; in addition the epithet regularly occurs in the context of martyrdom, see *Mart. Pol.* 17, 3.

⁴⁵ 'Unharmed' with the purpose or result understood, "so that they remain unharmed."

	ὁδὸς οὐρανία.	are the path to heaven. ⁴⁶
35	Λόγος ἀέναος, αἰὼν ἀπλετος, φῶς αἰδιον, ἐλέους πηγὴ, ῥεκτὴρ ἀρετῆς	Ever-flowing word, ⁴⁷ unlimited age, ⁴⁸ undying light, ⁴⁹ source of mercy, ⁵⁰ artisan of virtue ⁵¹
40	σεμνῇ βιοτῇ θεὸν ὑμνοῦντων. Χριστέ Ἰησοῦ, γάλα οὐράνιον μαστῶν γλυκερῶν	of those who praise God with their holy life. ⁵² Christ Jesus, heavenly milk ⁵³ pressed from the sweet breasts
45	νύμφης χαρίτων σοφίας τῆς σῆς, ἐκθλιβόμενον. Οἱ νηπίαχοι ἄταλοις στόμασιν	of the bride, ⁵⁴ gracious gifts ⁵⁵ of your wisdom. The tiny infants with tender mouths,
50	ἀπιταλλόμενοι,	suckled ⁵⁶

⁴⁶ The meaning of these compact phrases becomes clear when connected with the preceding part; the children should be led into heaven along the footsteps of Christ. The phrases form a transition to the next part where Christ rather than the children is central. For the poetic diminutive ‘footprints’ (ἵχνιον), see also *Strom.* II 104, 3; IV 62, 3; otherwise Clement uses the more regular ἵχνος (*passim*).

⁴⁷ For ‘everflowing’ (ἀέναος), see also *Strom.* I 29, 1; VI 39, 3 (*Kerygma Petri*, fr. 2). In Christian usage the word is related to baptism, either literally (see *Hom. Clem.* 11, 35), or metaphorically (see Origen, fr. 54 in *Joh.* 4:12, ed. E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke*, vol. 4, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 10; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903, 528,25).

⁴⁸ Age not measured by time.

⁴⁹ The nature of the divine Logos is described in apophatic terms: ἀέναος–ἀπλετος–αἰδιον, ‘unconfined-unlimited-undying.’

⁵⁰ In a play on words ‘mercy’ (ἐλεος) is related with ‘oil’ (ἐλαιον); see *Paed.* II 62, 3; together with ‘source’ it becomes another subtle reminder of baptism.

⁵¹ ‘Artisan’ (ῥεκτὴρ) is another poetic word only used here.

⁵² The word for ‘life’ (βιοτή) is unusual; normally it would be βίος or ζωή. The holiness of the Christian lifestyle is often accentuated by Clement, see *Protr.* 109, 2; *Paed.* I 99, 2; III 73, 4.

⁵³ Earlier in the *Pedagogue* Clement expounds on the theme of ‘milk’ as source of life, see *Paed.* I 34 ff. Here the metaphor stands for Christ, the Logos, given as milk to the believers through the church. Elsewhere the provider of the milk is the Father, and there Clement offers the unusual image of the “fatherly breasts of his goodness,” see *Paed.* I 46, 1. For the ramifications of the metaphor and parallels in other early Christian texts, see Anniewies van den Hoek, “Milk and Honey in the Theology of Clement of Alexandria,” in *Fides Sacramenti. Sacramentum Fidei*. Studies in Honour of Pieter Smulders (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), 27–39, and Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: University Press, 1999).

⁵⁴ The ‘bride’ as metaphor for the church is both a wife and a virgin, see *Paed.* I 22, 2.

⁵⁵ The ‘milk’ as gift may also have liturgical overtones here.

⁵⁶ A play on words in Greek exists between ‘tender’ and ‘suckled,’ ἄταλός and ἀπιταλλόμενος.

θηλῆς λογικῆς
 πνεύματι δροσερῶ
 ἐπιμπλάμενοι,
 αἴνους ἀφελεῖς,
 55 ὕμνους ἀτρεκεῖς
 βασιλεῖ Χριστῶ,
 μισθοὺς ὁσίους
 ζωῆς διδαχῆς,
 μέλπωμεν ὁμοῦ.
 60 Πέμπωμεν ἀπλῶς
 παῖδα κρατερόν,
 χορὸς εἰρήνης
 οἱ χριστόγονοι,
 λαὸς σώφρων,
 65 ψάλλωμεν ὁμοῦ
 θεὸν εἰρήνης.

at the nipple of the logos⁵⁷
 and filled
 with the dewy Spirit.⁵⁸
 Let us sing together⁵⁹
 to Christ, the king,
 artless praise⁶⁰
 and truthful songs,
 holy wages⁶¹
 for the teaching of life.
 Let us escort with simplicity⁶²
 the mighty son,
 as a chorus of peace,⁶³
 born of Christ,⁶⁴
 temperate people;
 let us sing psalms together
 to the God of peace.*

⁵⁷ Here it is the Logos personally who suckles the infants.

⁵⁸ Clement uses the poetic word 'dewy' (δροσερός) only here.

⁵⁹ The emphasis in the hymn again changes back from Christ to the faithful in a final exhortation.

⁶⁰ Rhetorically, the hymn returns to its beginning. A number of adjectives used in the first verses recur at the end (ἀτρεκής, ἀφελής). As in the beginning a special emphasis is put on the simplicity of faith, see also line 60 of the hymn.

⁶¹ The notion of compensation also occurs in the introduction to the hymn, *Paed.* III 101, 3.

⁶² The idea of escorting exists in the word πέμπω: it is a technical term in Greek cult language for conducting an offering.

⁶³ The appearance of the chorus was already prepared in lines 5–10 of the hymn.

⁶⁴ This word does not exist in Greek (χριστόγονος) and is invented for the occasion; a similar neologism can be found in Ignatius of Antioch, who renders χριστόνομος, see Ignatius, *Rom. proem.*

* With many thanks to my husband John Herrmann for his help on the translation and for providing art historical information.

MUSICAL SETTINGS OF CLEMENT'S 'HYMN TO CHRIST THE SAVIOUR'

Jane Schatkin Hettrick

Clement's 'Hymn to Christ the Saviour,' appended to manuscripts of his book *Paedagogus* (The Tutor) is considered to be the most ancient hymn (text) of the Christian church. It entered the mainstream of Christian hymnody within the Oxford Movement¹ in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was translated into English in 1846 by the American Congregationalist pastor Henry Martyn Dexter (1821–1890).² Dexter translated Clement's hymn for a sermon he was writing on "some prominent characteristics of the early Christians," based on the text Deuteronomy 32:7 ("Remember the days of old ..."). After making a literal translation, he prepared a poetic version for his congregation to sing.³ Known by the first line of this poetic translation as 'Shepherd of Tender Youth,' Clement's 'Hymn to Christ the Saviour' has appeared in dozens of English-language hymnals and has received numerous musical settings by different composers.⁴

¹ The Oxford Movement, which started in 1833 within the Church of England, sought to recover 'ancient' (pre-Reformation) traditions of music and liturgy. This antiquarian industry brought back plainchant and translated many Latin hymns, some of which became standard to hymnals of most denominations (e.g., 'Veni Immanuel'). Erik Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymns* (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, 1981), 89 f.

² Henry Martyn Dexter, pastor of churches in Manchester (New Hampshire) and Boston, is the author of several books about Congregationalism, including *Congregationalism, What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Is Better than any Other Form of Church Government* (1865) and *A Handbook of Congregationalism* (1880). He also wrote a number of historical studies, most dealing with early American topics, e.g., *As To Roger Williams and His Banishment from the Massachusetts Colony* (1876). The founder of the *Congregationalist Quarterly* (1858), he was editor of the *Congregationalist and Recorder*. Bernhard Pick, *Hymns and Poetry of the Eastern Church* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1908), 10.

³ Dexter's translation was first published in an issue of *The Congregationalist*, 21 Dec. 1849. His literal translation is given in Louis Fitzgerald Benson, *Studies of Familiar Hymns* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1903), 250 f.

⁴ 'Shepherd of Tender Youth' has been considered a prototype for the general category of 'shepherd' hymns that are found in almost all hymnals, many being poetic versions of or loosely based on Psalm 23. Samuel Willoughby Duffield, *English Hymns: Their Authors and History* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1886), 479.

Because of the obscurity of the original language—both the distance of hundreds of years and the idiosyncratic writing of the Greek author—the English version at best approximates the content of Clement’s poetry.⁵ The degree of freedom becomes clear if we consider Dexter’s five-verse, thirty-five line translation (given here) with more literal renderings of the Greek.⁶

(1) Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth
Through devious ways;
Christ, our triumphant King,
We come thy name to sing
Hither our children bring
To shout our praise.

(2) Thou art our holy Lord,
The all-subduing Word,
Healer of strife;
Thou didst thyself abase,
That from sin’s deep disgrace
Thou mightest save our race,
And give us life.

(3) Thou art the great High-Priest;
Thou hast prepared the feast
Of heavenly love;
While in our mortal pain
None calls on thee in vain;
Help thou dost not disdain—
Help from above.

(4) Ever be thou our guide,
Our Shepherd and our Pride,
Our Staff and Song:
Jesus, thou Christ of God,
By thy perennial Word

⁵ Clement’s poem has been described as a “sublime but somewhat turgid song of praise to the Logos,” and “not intended for public worship” (Pick, *Hymns and Poetry*, 7 f.). Pick quotes a literal English translation of the complete hymn from Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: B. Eerdmans, 1910), 230.

⁶ An English translation characterized as a “free-verse rendition” was made by Simon P. Wood, *Clement of Alexandria: Christ the Educator* (The Fathers of the Church, vol. 23; New York: Fathers of the Church, 1954), 276–278. An annotated, more literal translation is that of Annewies van den Hoek, “Hymn of the Holy Clement to Christ the Saviour,” in Mark Kiley (ed.), *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1997), 296–303 (see Appendix 1 in the present volume).

Lead us where thou hast trod,
Make our faith strong.

(5) So now, and till we die,
Sound we thy praises high,
And joyful sing;
Infants and the glad throng
Who to thy Church belong,
Unite to swell the song
To Christ our King!⁷

However loosely based on Clement's poem, Dexter's verses gained a firm place in Christian hymnody⁸ and his text has preserved this ancient hymn for congregations to sing today.⁹ Perhaps because of its irregular structure, it never became 'married' to one tune.¹⁰ (Musical problems associated with the poetic format are discussed below.) As a result, 'Shepherd of Tender Youth' (hereafter 'Dexter') has received or is associated with at least twenty-one different musical settings, including versions from the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. While Dexter was the first and remains the best-known translation, other English versions have been made, and new tunes provided to accompany these translations as well as variant versions of Dexter. Following is a list of tunes by their names as found with English-language renderings of Clement's hymn: Braun, Dort, Greenwood, Hemans, Hinman, Italian Hymn, Kirby Bedon, Knecht, Malvern, Mamre, Milton Abbas, Moab, Monk's Gate, New Haven, Olivet, St. Ambrose, St. Gabriel, Sherwin, Stobel, Tivoli, and Worship.¹¹

⁷ This text is given in Pick, *Hymns and Poetry*, 24 f.

⁸ The Dexter/Clement hymn appears primarily in the hymnals of 'mainline' Protestant churches: Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. Evangelical denominations (e.g., Baptist) have used it less commonly.

⁹ Minor changes in Dexter's translation have been made by editors of hymnals, but none of these alterations changes so much as to create a new version. Also, not every hymnal contains all five of Dexter's verses. It is difficult to know if the inclusion or omission of specific verses results from doctrinal concerns, space considerations, or other reasons.

¹⁰ A hymn text is said to be 'married' to a specific tune when the text is permanently linked to one tune and is not generally combined with other tunes. Occasionally a text-tune marriage results from the fact that the author of the text also composed the music, as in the case of Martin Luther's 'Ein feste Burg.' Such marriages also derive from early and/or long-term association of the text and tune, as well as the particular suitability of the music to the words. For example, the uniting of Isaac Watts' (1674–1748) hymn 'O God, Our Help in Ages Past' (1719) with the tune 'St. Anne,' (1708) attributed to William Croft (1678–1727).

¹¹ This list should not be considered exhaustive, as new tunes continue to be produced, and some older tunes may exist in obscure sources.

The earliest melody known to be joined with Dexter's text is by the seventeenth-century Jesuit composer Johann Georg Franz Braun (before 1630-after 1675).¹² The tune, identified by the composer's surname, appears in several collections, the earliest probably being *The Hymnal*, issued by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1895 and revised in 1911.¹³ 'Braun' is a lyrical melody, whose repeated notes and simple rhythms give it a song-like character. (Example 1) It comes from one of the two songbooks that the composer brought out in 1664.¹⁴

Example 1
Braun



From the eighteenth-century repertoire, Dexter's text acquired two additional settings. The first comes from a volume of German chorales: Johann Müller's *Choralbuch* (1754).¹⁵ This tune came to be known by the name 'Stobel'.¹⁶ (Example 2) As was the practice prior to the nineteenth century, hymnals and psalters that contained music intended for congregational

¹² Johann Georg Franz Braun, a German composer active in Bohemia, was cantor and choirmaster in the Church of St. Nicolai in Eger (Cheb, now Czech Republic). His two songbooks constitute a significant contribution to the advancement of the genre of sacred song with continuo accompaniment. Braun took melodies from various existing collections, but he also included many melodies of his own composition. Walther Lipphardt and Jiří Sehnal, "Braun, Johann Georg Franz," *Grove Music Online*.

¹³ Braun is also found in later Presbyterian hymnals (*The Psalter Hymnal*, 1927; *Trinity Hymnal*, 1961) as well as those of Reformed (*The Book of Worship*, 1929) and Mennonite groups (*Church Hymnal*, *Mennonite: A Collection of Hymns and Sacred Songs*, with *Deutscher Anhang*, 1927).

¹⁴ With the original text 'Ave Maria zart,' this melody apparently came from his songbook of 1664, which survives only in *Echo Hymnodiae Coelestis*, an enlarged edition published in 1675. D. Dewitt Wasson, *Hymntune Index and Related Hymn Materials*, vol. 2 (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 1998), 808, 874.

¹⁵ Johann Müller, *Melodien der 150 Psalmen Davids, als anderer in beyden evangelischen Kirchen unsers Deutschlands bisher eingeführten alten und neuen Lieder in sich fasst: zum allgemeinen Nutzen für Kirchen und Schulen, auch Privat-Andachten auf eine ganz neue Art eingerichtet und mit einem dazu nützigen Vorbericht*.

¹⁶ The names of hymn tunes derive from varied sources, among them being the title or a phrase from the first line, composer's name, author's name, place of origin, often a saint, or other assigned term. It is beyond the scope of this study to trace the origin of tune names.

singing gave just the melody, without harmonization or accompaniment. When 'Stobel' was chosen for the Clement hymn in the nineteenth century, it received a simple harmonization by William H. Havergal (1793–1870).¹⁷ In this version it appeared in *The Church Hymnal*, published around 1893 for use in the Episcopal Church and again in the *Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church*, published in 1917 for the United Lutheran Church in America.¹⁸ 'Stobel' exemplifies hymns in the chorale style of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in that the melody has one note for each syllable of text, and the harmonic rhythm is active. In keeping with chorale style, Havergal's harmonization gives a different chord with each note of the melody.¹⁹ While 'Stobel' is a solidly constructed tune, based on chorale tradition, it apparently did not persist much into later hymnals, perhaps because of its German origin.

Example 2
Stobel



The other eighteenth-century melody united with Dexter is by Felice de Giardini (1716–1796).²⁰ Known by the title 'Italian Hymn,' referring to the

¹⁷ William Henry Havergal, an English clergyman and composer, is best known for his efforts to revive old English psalmody and also many German chorales for use in English parishes. An active antiquarian, he produced an edition in 1845 of Thomas Ravenscroft's *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* (1621); in 1847 he brought out his own volume, *Old English Psalmody*, which went into five editions. His harmonizations remain standard for numerous hymns. Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymns*, 90 f.

¹⁸ *The Church Hymnal*, revised and enlarged, in accordance with the action of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. (Boston, ca. 1893); *Common Service Book with Hymnal*, authorized by the United Lutheran Church in America (Philadelphia, 1917, 1918).

¹⁹ Chorale style is the basic musical idiom for most hymn settings found in hymnals intended for congregational use. Beginning in the late 19th century, most hymnals present hymn melodies with a four-part harmonization, notated in two staves, with one chord for each melody note. This arrangement allowed the choir, as well as persons in the congregation the option of singing the inner parts, and it also provided an accompaniment for the organist to play.

²⁰ A brilliant violinist, Giardini began his career as a touring virtuoso. For most of his life he was associated with the London Opera, first as a leader then in management. He wrote several operas and also instrumental music. Other titles given to this tune are 'Trinity'

The majority of tunes allied with Dexter come from the nineteenth century. The finest tune of this group is probably 'Olivet' (Example 4) by the American composer and educator Lowell Mason (1792–1872).²⁵ 'Olivet' was first published in Mason's collection *Spiritual Songs for Social Worship* (1832). Named for the biblical Mount of Olives, it has long been connected to the text "My Faith Looks up to Thee," written by Congregationalist minister Ray Palmer (1808–1887). It is possible that Dr. Dexter had 'Olivet' in mind as he translated Clement's hymn, and that he introduced 'Shepherd of Tender Youth' to his congregation with Mason's tune. Given that Lowell Mason and Henry Martyn Dexter both moved in musical circles of New England, and that 'Olivet' had been published only fifteen years earlier, it is plausible to consider that possibility. It would also account for Dr. Dexter's choice of metrical structure, which fits that of 'Olivet.' The Lutheran Church seems to favor 'Olivet' for Dexter, as this combination is found in several Lutheran hymnals, including *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*, and *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941).²⁶ In spite of its staying power when together with the Palmer text, 'Olivet' did not become the established tune-of-choice for Dexter. A second Mason tune used with Dexter is 'Dort' (Example 5), the name possibly referring to the town of Dordrecht in South West Netherlands.²⁷ Serving for a number of different texts, this tune together with Dexter is found in a couple of early twentieth-century hymnals.²⁸ 'Dort' is a serviceable melody, but less attractive than 'Olivet.'

²⁵ An important figure in American music, Mason made his mark on education. He founded the Boston Academy of Music, which in the 1830s succeeded in establishing music in the curriculum of public schools. Through his positions in the Boston schools as well as his published writings, he exerted a lasting influence on the development of music education. Trained as an organist and church musician, he spent twenty years (1831–1851) as choirmaster in Congregational Churches in Boston and compiled two collections of music for children: *The Juvenile Psalmist* (1831) and *The Juvenile Lyre* (1832–1833). He is best remembered as the composer of numerous hymn tunes, and he is represented in almost every American hymnal. Among the best known of these are 'Antioch' (Joy to the World), 'Bethany' (Nearer My God to Thee), and 'Hamburg' (When I Survey the Wondrous Cross).

²⁶ *Christian Worship, A Lutheran Hymnal* authorized by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993); *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1941).

²⁷ 'Dort' was included in the anthology *Carmina Sacra* (1843), one of Mason's edited collections.

²⁸ *The Methodist Hymnal: Official Hymnals of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1905); *The New Christian Hymnal* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: B. Eerdmans, ca. 1929).

Example 4
Olivet



Example 5
Dort



During the nineteenth century this text acquired several more tunes, none of them striking or memorable. A tune ('Greenwood') by Ebenezer Prout (1835–1909)²⁹ was used in the *Hymnal and Liturgies of the Moravian Church* published in 1920. (Example 6) 'Greenwood,' also known as 'Allen,' gives Dexter an adequate but undistinguished melodic line. Its loose melodic construction lacks motivic coherence, and the final repeated tones make for a weak ending. Another nineteenth-century composer who added to the repertoire of tunes for Dexter is William Fisk Sherwin (1826–1888).³⁰ Sherwin's tune, named 'Cutting' (Example 7) is found in some mid-twentieth century collections, including the *Psalter Hymnal*³¹ issued by the Reformed Church. 'Cutting' is a solidly designed tune, which, in its rhythmic organization, closely resembles 'Olivet.'

²⁹ Ebenezer Prout was an eminent British musical theorist, the author of books on musical form, harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration (for example, *Instrumentation*, 1876). His treatise *Harmony* went into at least sixteen editions. The first edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1878) contains fifty-three of his articles. His theoretical writings served as text books for generations of music students well into the twentieth century. Rosemary Williamson, "Prout, Ebenezer," *Grove Music Online*.

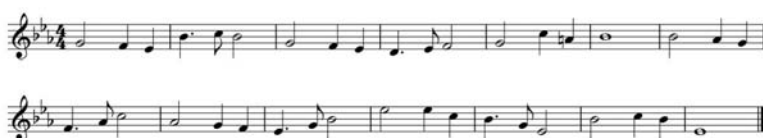
³⁰ Sherwin, an American Baptist, was a student of Lowell Mason. He composed mainly hymn tunes and carols for children. In collaboration with Baptist minister Robert Lowry, he produced a number of hymnals for use in Sunday Schools, including *Bright Jewels* (New York: Biglow & Main, 1869). John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, 3rd edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), 1055.

³¹ *Psalter Hymnal, Centennial Edition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Publication Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, 1959).

Example 6
Greenwood



Example 7
Cutting



Perhaps the most widely disseminated tune united with Dexter is known as 'Kirby Bedon'³² (Example 8) by the English organist Edward Bunnnett (1834–1923).³³ In American usage, it found its way into hymnals of almost every Protestant denomination, combined with various texts. After its appearance in the Episcopal book *The Church Hymnal*,³⁴ 'Kirby Bedon' (1887) served for Dexter in hymnals of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, Moravian, Mennonite, Baptist, and Seventh Day Adventist Churches, as well as several non-denominational and student hymnals. It is difficult to explain the popularity of 'Kirby Bedon,' as its musical quality does not rise above average, and it is inferior to several other tunes, including 'Italian Hymn' and 'Olivet.' Like many hymn tunes, it has come in and out of favour. For example, the *Lutheran Service Book and Hymnal* (Augsburg, 1958) went with it, while the successor volume, *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Augsburg, 1978) dropped both tune and text from the collection.

³² 'Kirby' is a form of 'Kirkby' which means 'church place.' 'Kirby Bedon' means 'the church near Bedon.' Two villages with the name Bedon are found in the region of Norfolk, England. Robert Guy McCutchan, *Hymn Tune Names: Their Sources and Significance* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1958), 89.

³³ Edward Bunnnett was an English organist who served in several cathedrals in Norwich. William Cowan and James Love, *The Music of the Church Hymnary and the Psalter in Meter: Its Sources and Composers* (Edinburgh: Henry Frowde, 1901), 21, 99, 130. The composer of a number of hymn tunes, he published works in *Sacred Harmony, 1865: A Work Containing Chants, Tunes, and Organ Pieces by Dr. Bunnnett and Twenty-four Original Tunes Set to Favorite Hymns by Edward Bunnnett* (1880).

³⁴ Boston, 1893.

the work of the Welsh composer Megan Watts Hughes (1842–1907).⁴⁰ By its several melismas (two notes per syllable of text) 'Worship' takes a more decorative approach than most other settings; again, it recalls the rhythmic design of 'Olivet.' William Henry Monk (1823–1889)⁴¹ contributed the tune 'St. Ambrose' (1874) (Example 13) to the list of tunes connected with Dexter. 'St. Ambrose' is a standard, singable melody, representative of the composer, who has been characterized as "a master of the simple, ordinary, tune."⁴² We should also mention the tune 'New Haven' (Example 14) by the American composer Thomas Hastings (1784–1872).⁴³ A rather plain tune, 'New Haven' does not figure prominently in the history of Dexter settings, but it appears as the tune serving for Dexter and two other texts in an early Presbyterian hymnal.⁴⁴

Example 9
Hemans



⁴⁰ Watts Hughes, the only woman whose tune has been combined with Dexter, is known to have written several hymn tunes. According to *Welsh Biography on Line*, she had a career as a singer and also did charitable work.

⁴¹ Monk's most important work was as editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861), an influential collection based on the principles of the Tractarians, which he guided through four editions and to which he contributed fifty-six tunes. He is best remembered for the tune 'Eventide,' which, married to the text 'Abide with Me,' is found in many hymnals today. 'St. Ambrose' appeared in several hymnals, including the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book with Tunes* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1931). Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymns*, 92, 98 f.; W.G. Polack, *Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), 548.

⁴² Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymns*, 98 f.

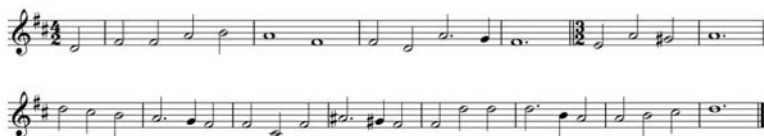
⁴³ Hastings was active in New York as a choir master. He edited several books of tunes and published hymn-books, including *Spiritual Songs for Social Worship* (Utica, New York: 1831–1832). His *Dissertation on Musical Taste* (1822) was influential. He is credited with numerous hymn tunes and also texts, although none is noted as having superior quality. His best known tune is 'Toplady,' which, married to the text 'Rock of Ages,' has become permanent in the repertoire of American hymnody. Paul Westermeyer, *Let the People Sing: Hymn Tunes in Perspective* (Chicago: GIA, 2005), 302.

⁴⁴ *Hymnal of the Presbyterian Church* (1866).

Example 10
Tivoli



Example 11
St. Gabriel



Example 12
Worship



Example 13
St. Ambrose



Example 14
New Haven



As mentioned above, Dexter cast his translation in an unusual metrical structure. This structure (6. 6. 4. 6. 6. 6. 4) may have presented a challenge to composers attempting to create a melody to complement the poem. In general, it probably works better set in triple meter because a three-beat

context more naturally accommodates the two shorter (4-beat) phrases. The uncommon meter may also explain why, although many tunes have been written, none has settled in as a universal tune favored for Dexter. It is not surprising, therefore, that Clement's hymn continued to inspire new translations. One of these is the work of the Scottish clergyman Hamilton Montgomerie MacGill (1807–1880).⁴⁵ His translation, published in his book *Songs of the Christian Creed and Life* (no. 90), consists of seventeen four-line verses in the meter 7. 6. 7. 6. It adheres more closely than Dexter to Clement's original. Six internal verses from MacGill's translation appear together with the tune 'Mamre' (Example 15) published in a Scottish hymnal.⁴⁶ Of course, MacGill's four-line stanzas and simpler metric structure required a shorter and probably less complex tune than the longer, less regular verses of Dexter. To illustrate, we quote the first verse, with the first line serving as the title: "Lead, holy Shepherd, lead us, / Thy feeble flock, we pray; / Thou King of little pilgrims, / Safe lead us all the way." Interestingly, the compilers of the Scottish hymnal chose a tune by a German pastor/composer, Friedrich Karl Ludwig Scholinus (1772–1816).⁴⁷ 'Mamre,' which does not stand out musically, is apparently not widely used in English-language hymnals. The abovementioned Scottish hymnal even provides that the MacGill verses may be sung to an alternate tune. The substitute tune, 'Knecht' (Example 16), appears as the primary tune for MacGill/Clement in the *Presbyterian Book of Praise* (1897). It bears the name of its composer, Justin Heinrich Knecht (1752–1817), an important musical figure in South Germany around 1800.⁴⁸ 'Knecht' (1799) is a stronger tune than 'Mamre,' and is more widely disseminated, albeit mostly with other texts.

⁴⁵ MacGill, a classics scholar, held various positions in the United Presbyterian Church, contributing hymn translations to the *Presbyterian Hymnal* (1876). His volume *Songs of the Christian Creed and Life: Selected from Eighteen Centuries* ((London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1876) contains his translations from Greek and Latin hymns as well as his own verses translated from English into Latin. His translations are highly regarded. Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, 708. MacGill describes the internal form of the Clement hymn as antiphonal, which form, he says "has been marred by the traditional punctuation," citing the version by Albertus Thierfelder (1868), *Notes Biographical and Critical*, "Clement of Alexandria," no p.

⁴⁶ *The Scottish Hymnary*, revised edition, Authorized for Use in Public Worship by the Church of Scotland (London: 1927). 'Mamre' seems to refer to the plain of Mamre cited in Genesis 13:18.

⁴⁷ Little is known about Scholinus, except that he was a pastor serving a congregation in Nedlitz, in Gemeinde Büden (Saxony) from 1797 to 1816.

⁴⁸ Knecht, who spent most of his life as an organist in Biberach, composed church music

Example 15
Mamre



Example 16
Knecht



From another Welsh composer, John Roberts (1822–1877),⁴⁹ we have two tunes associated with Clement’s hymn, one with Dexter, the other with a different translation. Roberts is an important figure in the great tradition of Welsh hymnody—Erik Routley calls him “Wales’s supreme master.”⁵⁰ The tune combined with Dexter is ‘Malvern’⁵¹ (Example 17). Coupled with Dexter, it is found in the *School Hymn Book of the Methodist Church* (1950). The second Roberts tune paired with a translation of Clement is called ‘Moab.’ (Example 18) Considered Roberts’s finest tune, ‘Moab’ (1869), is one of the most memorable melodies that has graced Clement’s hymn. This pairing appears in the hymnal of the United Reformed Church, *Rejoice and Sing* (1991).

as well as instrumental and stage works. Through his pedagogical books (e.g., *Orgelschule*, 1795–1798 and *Musikalischer Katechismus*, 1803) and theoretical treatises, and his writings in musical periodicals (e.g., *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*), he influenced musical education and thought of the time. Michael Ladenburger, “Knecht, Justin Heinrich,” *Grove Music Online*.

⁴⁹ Roberts, also known by the Welsh name Ieuan Gwyllt, was a non-conformist minister, music teacher, author and editor of music journals. He founded the music festivals *Cymanfâu Ganu*, which became nationally established. His book of hymn tunes, *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfao*, published in 1859, sold numerous copies. Many of his hymn tunes remain in current use. *The Hymnal 1940 Companion*, 542 f.; Owain Edwards and A.F. Leighton Thomas, “Roberts, John,” *Grove Music Online*.

⁵⁰ Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymns*, 118.

⁵¹ ‘Malvern’ was first published in Lowell Mason, *The Hallelujah: A Book for the Service of Song in the House of the Lord* (Boston: Sanborn, Carter, & Bazin, 1849).

Example 17
Malvern



Example 18
Moab



What made it possible for Roberts's strong melody 'Moab' to connect with Clement is the new translation made in 1939 by F. Bland Tucker (1895–1984).⁵² Modeled in part on Dexter, Tucker's translation is entitled 'Master of Eager Youth.' It was introduced (not with 'Moab') in the Episcopal book *The Hymnal 1940* and appeared again in the subsequent *The Hymnal 1982*, in the latter without the first verse and therefore taking its title from the second verse, 'Jesus, Our Mighty Lord.' Like Dr. Dexter, Tucker gives a paraphrase rather than a more exact rendering of the original Greek, as seen in the first four lines of stanza 1: "Master of eager youth, controlling, guiding; lifting our hearts to truth, new power providing." Tucker cast his poem in the meter 6. 5. 6. 5. 6. 6. 5. As with MacGill, this metric structure avoids the problem inherent in Dexter.

In Tucker's translation Clement's hymn rose to new heights when enriched with a traditional English melody known as 'Monk's Gate' or 'Sussex.' (Example 19) Arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams,⁵³ 'Monks Gate' surpasses in musical quality all previous (and later) settings. First published

⁵² Francis Bland Tucker was an Episcopal priest, biblical scholar, musician, and poet. He wrote and translated hymn texts that were published in *The Hymnal 1940* and *The Hymnal 1982*. Raymond F. Glover, ed., *The Hymnal 1982 Companion*, vol. 3 (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., ca. 1990), 900 f.

⁵³ A leading English composer of the twentieth century, Vaughan Williams left a large body of choral and vocal works. He wrote several hymn tunes, the best known being 'Sine Nomine' ('For All the Saints'). He acquired 'Monks Gate,' originally a secular folk song, from a singer at the location Monks Gate, near Horsham in Sussex. *The Hymnal 1940 Companion*, 236.

in *Songs of Praise* (London, 1931) it continued in *The Hymnal 1940* and lives on in *The Hymnal 1982*.⁵⁴ 'Monks Gate' has long adorned the words adapted from the great seventeenth-century poet John Bunyan, 'He Who Would Valiant Be.' Evidently, in this case, an established 'marriage' of text and tune did not nullify 'Monks Gate' for use with a different text.

Example 19
Monks Gate



It was Dexter, however, not MacGill or Tucker, that composers of the twentieth century turned to for their new settings of Clement. In 1951, the British composer Eric H. Thiman (1900–1975)⁵⁵ created the tune 'Milton Abbas.' (Example 20) Not long after, in 1953, the American composer and church musician Austen C. Lovelace (1919–2010)⁵⁶ contributed the tune 'Hinman' to the repertoire. (Example 21) Lovelace, more than Thiman, handles the metrical challenges of Dexter in an original way. His use of different musical meters (measures of two, three, and four beats) invests Dexter with renewed freshness.⁵⁷ Time will tell if it has lasting power.

Example 20
Milton Abbas



⁵⁴ In *The Hymnal 1940* an alternate tune ('St. Dunstan's') is suggested, presumably because it had been a second tune for 'He Who Would Valiant Be.' *The Hymnal 1982* did not retain that option for Tucker/Clement.

⁵⁵ An organist and choir master in the Congregational Church, Thiman was a prolific composer of church music. 'Milton Abbas' was published in the *BBC Hymn Book* and *Congregational Praise* (both 1951), Wasson, *Hymntune Index*, vol. 3, 1798.

⁵⁶ Lovelace composed over 300 choral pieces, including numerous hymn-anthems. 'Hinman' is one of his few actual hymn tunes. Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymns*, 172.

⁵⁷ The Lovelace tune is found in the Presbyterian volume *The Hymnal* (New York: Westminster Press, 1955).

Example 21
Hinman



In conclusion, the selection of music for Clement's hymn remains a work in progress. As we have seen, ever since Henry Martyn Dexter first created the text 'Shepherd of Tender Youth,' hymnal compilers have sought out 'new' old tunes for it as well as for the other translations of the original Greek poem; moreover, composers continue to write new melodies for Dexter's well-loved poem. For the 2010 conference on Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* VII, Lawrence Djintcharadze composed two new settings of Dexter. Thus far, four tunes stand out because hymnals have adopted them repeatedly, and they are in collections currently used in churches: 'Italian Hymn,' 'Olivet,' 'Kirby Bedon,' and 'Monks Gate.' Five centuries of musical efforts testify to the enduring significance of Clement's 'Hymn to Christ the Saviour.'⁵⁸

⁵⁸ I want to thank Dr. Deborah Carlton Loftis (Executive Director, The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada), Rev. Robert E. Smith (Electronic Resources Librarian, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana), Prof. Carl P. Daw (Boston University), Prof. Kenneth Kauffman (Librarian, Westminster Choir College of Rider University), and Rev. Brian J. Hamer (Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bayside, New York) for their help in the research for this article.

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